

● BJP ● Other NDA ● Cong ● Other INDIA ● Others For comparison, 2014 and 2019 results are visualised with current NDA and INDIA alliances



UTTAR PRADESH | 80 SEATS
Samajwadi surge India's largest state gave BJP its biggest shock of the LS polls, the saffron double engine of Modi and Yogi derailing before the INDIA bloc pairing of Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi. With 37 seats, Samajwadi Party emerged as the star performer of the Congress-led alliance, putting in its best Lok Sabha performance. Seen as overwhelming favourite, BJP fell to 33 seats (also losing Ayodhya) and NDA to 36 from 64 (BJP 62) in 2019. Its vote share fell from nearly 50% to around 43% while SP's jumped from 18% in 2019 to 33.5%. Congress won six seats (its vote share rising from 6.5% to nearly 10%), giving INDIA bloc a total of 43.



MAHARASHTRA | 48
Cong, Uddhav & Pawar play The 'real Sena, real NCP' question has been settled by the people. Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar have emerged on top of the bruising political slugfest that saw their parties split. Thackeray unseated as CM and Pawar dislodged from NCP by nephew Ajit. With Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) bagging 29 of the state's 48 seats, not only have Pawar and Uddhav reasserted themselves as mass leaders, they have also gained an advantage ahead of Assembly polls this Oct. It's Congress that's the biggest gainer, though, having risen from one seat in 2019 to 13 and emerging as the single-largest party.



WEST BENGAL | 42
Didi No. 1 again With just 12 seats for BJP, Bengal's voters dealt a blow to the saffron party as well as pollsters. The LS poll script was similar to the 2021 Assembly elections. BJP's loss was Trinamool's gain. As BJP fell from its 2019 mark of 18 seats, Mamata Banerjee's party raised its tally from 22 in 2019 to 29. Women, minority and tribal voters seem to have contributed to the Trinamool show even as the party retained its urban base. BJP's Sandeshkhali pitch didn't work, neither did CAA make an impact.



BIHAR | 40
Nitish, Chirag light up NDA NDA put up another good show, with the governing coalition winning 30 seats. CM Nitish Kumar's JD(U) led from the front, winning 12 seats. BJP won 12 and LJP (RV) of Chirag Paswan five, while Jitan Ram Manjhi won from Gaya. NDA had swept in 2019, bagging 39 seats. INDIA bloc made inroads but the massive crowds seen at Tejashwi Yadav's rallies didn't quite translate into votes for RJD, which won just 4 seats. Congress, its alliance partner, won 3. What seems to have worked is Modi's repeated reminders about RJD's "Jungle Raj".



TAMIL NADU | 39
DMK wins it all MK Stalin's stock rose in national politics as he led the INDIA bloc to a clean sweep, doing better than the impressive 38 out of 39 the DMK alliance won in 2019. The alliance's regional and caste dynamics and DMK gov't's big welfare push blew the opposition – regional rival ADMK and BJP – away. For ADMK, which had been a BJP ally, and especially Edappadi K Palaniswami, the defeat of state BJP chief K Annamalai was the high point. A conversation gaining momentum now is whether ADMK and BJP will continue to contest future polls as rivals.

MADHYA PRADESH | 29
Saffron fortress intact After this bruising victory, as the saffron camp gets into damage-assessment mode, this is one state it needn't worry about. Building on the momentum of the 2023 Assembly polls, BJP swept all 29 seats, finally breaching the Congress citadel of Chhindwara. The Nath family's political fortunes were at stake in what was their impregnable stronghold for four decades. The 29-0 scoreline was also a boost for CM Mohan Yadav, who was propelled from the back benches of state BJP to the top post.

GUJARAT | 26
BJP clean sweep denied

Year	BJP	Other NDA	Cong	Other INDIA	Others
2014	26	0	0	0	0
2019	26	0	0	0	0
2024	25	0	1	0	0

Congress's sole win, ending its decade-long losing streak – in Banaskantha – denied BJP a hat-trick of clean sweeps, but the rest of the state reposed unwavering faith in Modi, with BJP bagging 25 of 26 seats. Union home minister Amit Shah rewrote his 2019 electoral victory margin record of 5.6 lakh by posting a thumping win in Gandhinagar, this time with a 7.4 lakh-plus margin. In Navsari, state BJP chief C R Paatil bettered his 2019 record.

RAJASTHAN | 25
Cong sees revival

Year	BJP	Other NDA	Cong	Other INDIA	Others
2014	25	0	0	0	0
2019	24	0	1	0	0
2024	14	8	3	0	0

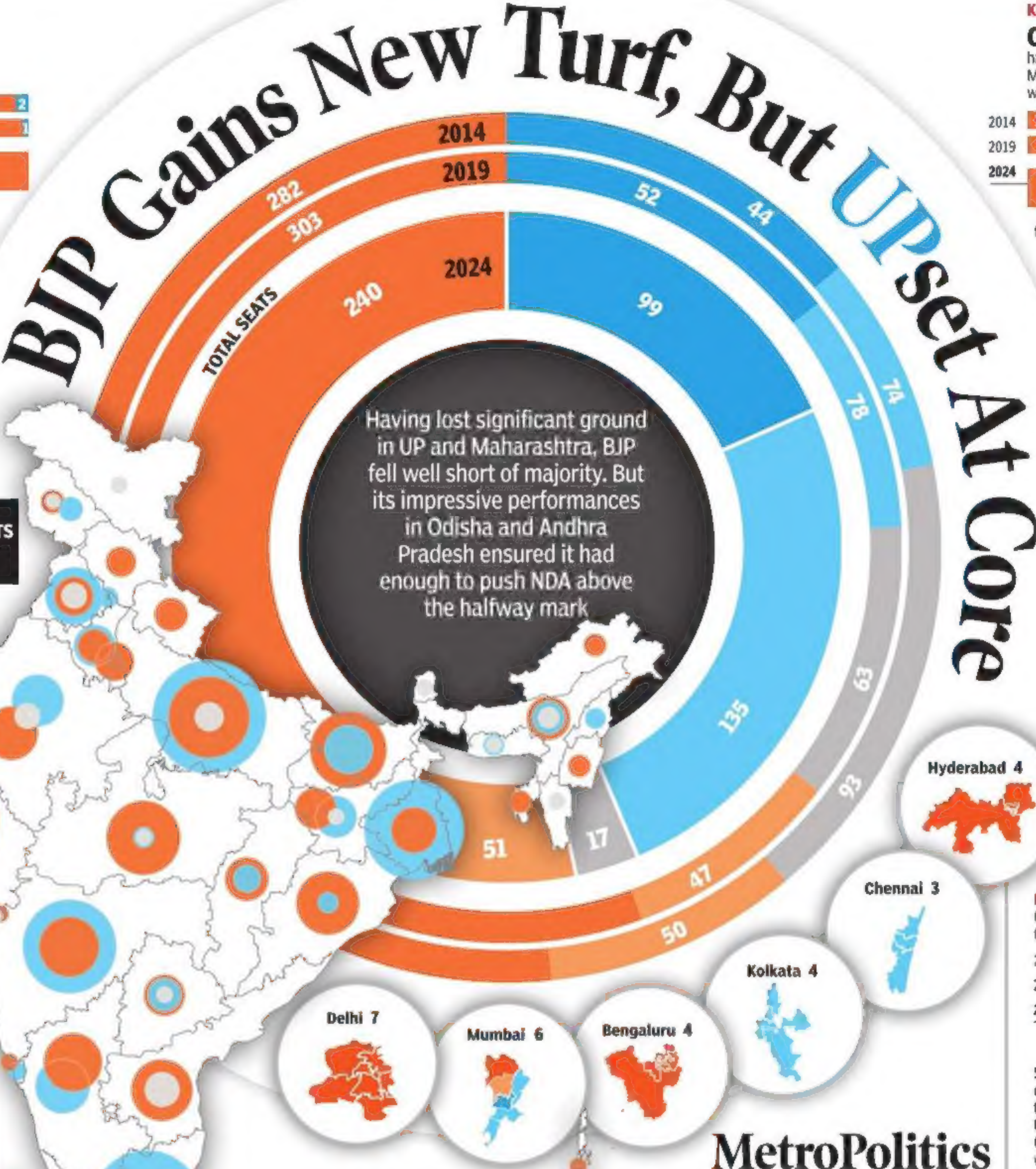
Congress ended its decade-long Lok Sabha seat drought with an impressive performance as it wrested 11 seats (3 with allies) in a state where BJP had made two clean sweeps in 2014 and 2019 and recently won assembly elections. Its experiment of forming its first alliance in the state with parties like RLP, BAP and CPM paid off – in fact, BAP's Raj Kumar Roat won by more than 2 lakh votes in Banswara, the place where the PM delivered the 'mangalsutra' speech after the first phase of polling. The absence of strong state-level leadership and party veteran Vasundhara Raje from the scene hurt BJP.

JHARKHAND | 14
NDA leads, INDIA gains NDA got nine seats out of 14 in Jharkhand, of which BJP won eight and its alliance partner, AJSU, one. INDIA improved its performance by increasing the size of its kitty from two to five. All tribal-reserved seats went with INDIA, in a show of resentment over ED action against former CM Hemant Soren. JMM successfully tapped into tribal sentiment against central govt refusing a separate Sama code in the Census register.

PUNJAB | 13
Fractured verdict Multi-cornered contests in all 13 seats of Punjab threw up a fractured verdict as governing party AAP upped its tally to 3, Congress won 7 seats. Congress and AAP were not in alliance here. Jailed pro-Khalistan Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh (Ind), won Khadoor Sahib by nearly 2 lakh votes, the state's highest margin. Sarabjit Singh, son of PM Indira Gandhi's assassin Beant Singh, won Faridkot by over 70,000 votes.

CHHATTISGARH | 11
Saffron sweep again BJP's Lok Sabha dominance in Chhattisgarh remains intact. In 2019, when Congress was flush from its assembly poll victory, BJP had bagged 9 seats. This time, it's done better with 10, a win that was significant to its national numbers. The result also puts first-time CM Vishnu Deo Sai, the first tribal to hold the position, on a stronger footing.

All results based on wins & leads at 11pm. Source: EC



ODISHA | 21
Saffron wave washes away Naveen This was BJP's biggest victory outside its strongholds of these general elections as the party decimated BJD to win 20 seats, up from just 8 in 2019. Naveen Patnaik's party, which has been governing for five consecutive terms and had won 12 seats in 2019, was wiped out with anti-incumbency finally catching up with the BJP chief, who has had a smooth run in the eastern state. Congress had another disappointing performance, ending up with just one seat.

HARYANA | 10
Resentment shows In a Modi-versus-public battle in Haryana, BJP's reliance on the Modi magic did not pay off. Having won all 10 seats in 2019 with record votes, the saffron party managed to keep only 5 seats, that too with massively reduced margins. The campaign led by former CM Manohar Lal Khattar, replaced to beat anti-incumbency, faltered in the face of farmers' anger, resentment over unemployment, the Agnipath scheme and the old pension scheme.

NORTH-EAST STATES
Cong trips NDA In this bloc, NDA's tally fell below that of 2019 by 3 seats, a sharp contrast to predictions of every exit poll. Individually, BJP lost four of the 17 seats it contested – 2 in Assam and one each in Manipur and Mizoram. NDA's tally fell from 18 in 2019 to 15. Congress surpassed its 2019 tally of 4, winning 7, including 3 in Assam. BJP's biggest dent was in conflict-hit Manipur, where it was rejected in the Meitei-dominated Imphal valley.

TELANGANA | 17
It's a Cong-BJP match now For the first time since its formation in 2014, Congress and BJP have become the dominant political forces in Telangana, both sharing the spoils with eight seats each as BRS was decimated and its vote share shifted in equal parts to the two national parties. From one seat (Secunderabad) in 2014 to four in 2019 and doubling it this time, BJPs growth here is impressive. The result strengthens CM A Revanth Reddy, who had said the LS polls were a referendum on Congress's five months in office in the state.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR | 5
Valley surprise The first LS polls after the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of J&K into two UTs five years ago delivered unexpected results, with former CMs Omar Abdullah of NC and Mehbooba Mufti of PDP conceding defeat before counting concluded. The BJP stronghold was intact: Union minister Jitendra Singh, seeking a third straight term, won Udhampur while party colleague, MP Jugal Kishore, retained Jammu. In 2019, NC had secured all three seats in the Kashmir valley, while BJP won both Jammu seats.

UNION TERRITORIES

UT	2014	2019	2024
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1	1	1
Chandigarh	1	1	1
Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	2	2	2
Ladakh	1	1	1
Lakshadweep	1	1	1
Puducherry	1	1	1

KARNATAKA | 28
Cong gain is BJP loss Karnataka has seen a repeat of the 2014 LS polls, when Modi became PM. Ten years later, BJP has again won 17 seats. With ally Janata Dal (S) winning 2 more, the NDA tally is a solid 19. However, this is a decline of 8 seats from NDA's 2019 tally. Congress, the governing party, won nine seats, a huge improvement from its 2019 tally of 1. Among prominent contestants, former PM H D Deve Gowda's son-in-law C N Manjunath won while his grandson Prajwal Revanna – accused of sexual abuse – lost.

ANDHRA PRADESH | 25
Runaway Naidu

Year	BJP	Other NDA	Cong	Other INDIA	Others
2014	2	15	8	0	0
2019	3	22	0	0	0
2024	3	18	4	0	0

The last-minute electoral patch-up with BJP and a return to the NDA fold brought about a windfall for TDP. It also reinforced the fact that TDP wins big whenever it goes to polls in alliance with other parties. In fact, TDP president and CM-in-waiting N Chandrababu Naidu has also emerged as a kingmaker for the NDA, with BJP falling short of majority. While YSRCP, which fought the polls alone, won 4 seats, TDP and its partners won 21. Of this, BJP won three and Jana Sena two, marking the latter's debut in Parliament.

KERALA | 20
UDF sweeps, BJP debuts Rahul Gandhi comfortably won Wayanad and Congress-led UDF swept up 18 seats along with 1 for CPM, giving the INDIA bloc a near whitewash. But Kerala brought smiles as well to BJP, which won a seat here for the first time – Thrissur, where actor Suresh Gopi made it a historic day for the saffron camp. The battle for Thiruvananthapuram, one of the most high-profile of these LS polls – between Union minister Rajeev Chandrashekhar and senior Congressman Shashi Tharoor – went down to the wire. Tharoor scraped through by 15,000 votes.

ASSAM | 14
Holding their positions BJP has been on a winning spree here since the 2014 Lok Sabha polls but failed to improve on its 2019 performance, its tally stuck at 9. Its two allies, AGP and UPPL, won a seat each, taking NDA's count to 11. Congress, too, maintained its 2019 tally of three, but it turned out to be a giant killer, with two seats coming at the expense of BJP and AIUDF.

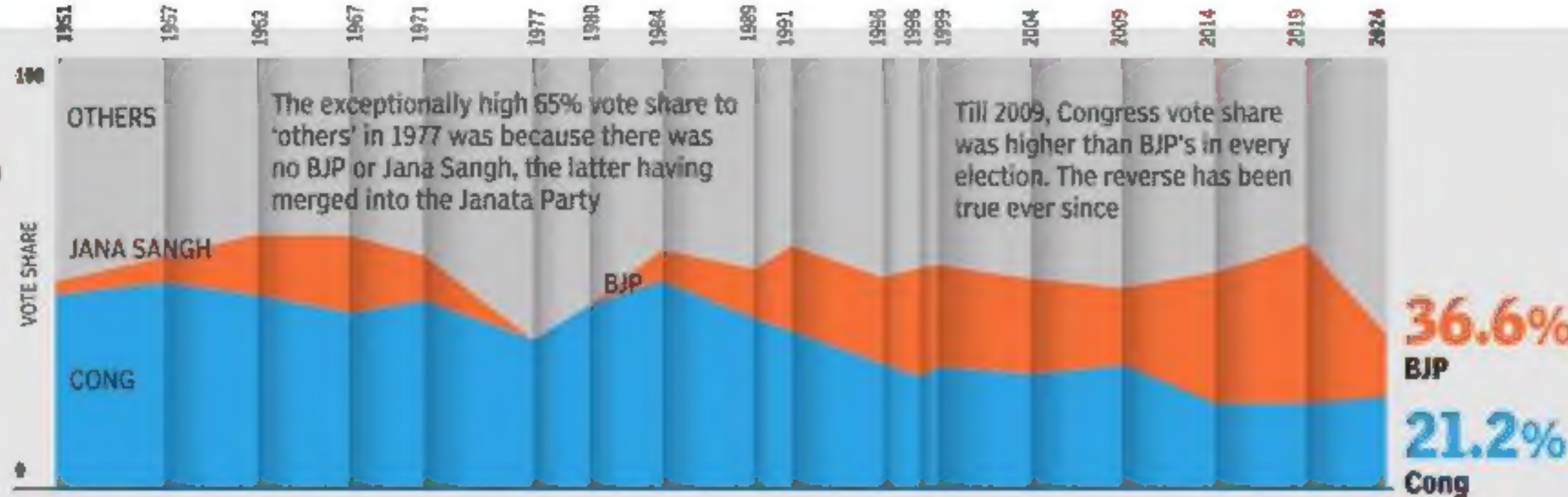
UTTARAKHAND | 5
Juggernaut rolls on There were no surprises, with BJP clinching all five seats with comfortable margins for the third straight time. Former CM Trivendra Singh Rawat, contesting his first Lok Sabha election, won comfortably in Haridwar.

HIMACHAL PRADESH | 4
3 in a row for BJP The saffron party has now scored a hat-trick of clean sweeps in the state. Actor Kangana Ranaut emerged victorious in Mandi, defeating Congress legislator Vikramaditya Singh, a setback for Himachal PCC chief Pratibha Singh.

GOA | 2
Evenly split Distrust, disenchantment and anti-incumbency against BJP in a highly polarised atmosphere saw Congress' Viriato Fernandes defeating South Goa by over 13,000 votes. BJP retained North Goa but it wasn't quite the breeze it expected the contest to be.

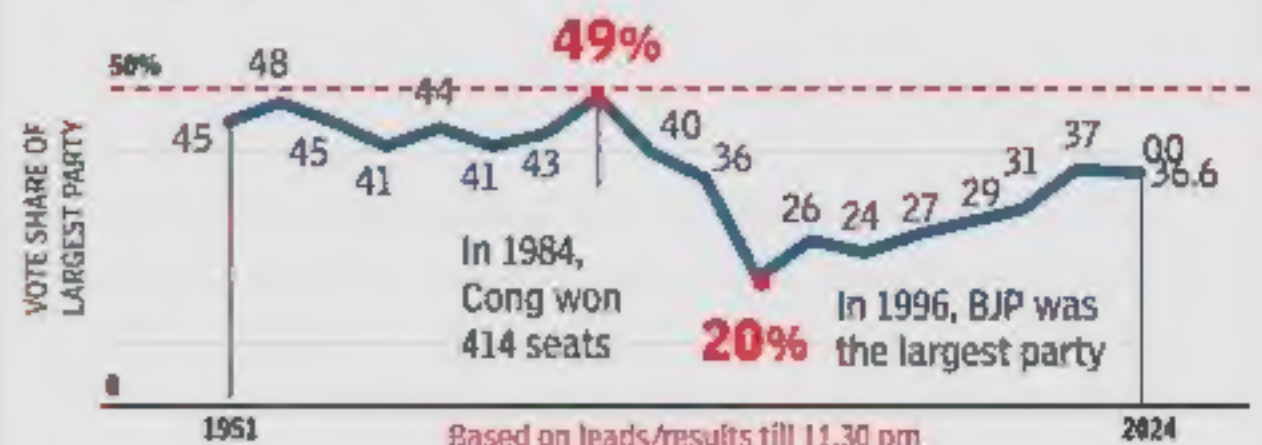
Cong's Loss Had Been BJP's Gain

BJP's vote share (Jana Sangh till 1971) didn't touch the 20% mark till 1991, the year when Congress's share fell below 40% for only the second time. By 2019, BJP was close to 40% and Congress had fallen below 20% for the first time ever



No Party Has Ever Won 50% Of Votes

In 12 years between 1984 and 1996, vote share of the largest party in Lok Sabha fell by 29 percentage points — 49% to 20%. In the first nine parliamentary elections, the largest party secured a minimum of 40% votes. No party has recorded such vote share since 1989



Behind The Numbers, Beyond The Headlines

What were voters saying, as they denied Modi's BJP majority, but still made it, by some distance, the single largest party? What was the message behind Rahul-powered Congress regaining its mojo? How can a govt running an economy that's growing at 8.2% suffer electoral reverses? TOI looks at the key takeaways from an election that had exit pollsters running for cover

NOTHING SHINES FOREVER, NOT EVEN BRAND MODI

Modi led BJP's campaign. He was BJP's campaign. And that was the problem. No political brand is immune to voter fatigue. Modi's wasn't either. BJP's rising vote share since 2014 was rightly attributed to Modi. The fall in its vote share must also mean Brand Modi has lost some lustre. Without doubt he's still a leader who commands substantial support. But, equally without doubt, that support wasn't enough to carry BJP beyond the finish line when voters had many questions for Modi Sarkar: Talking up growth rates when jobs are scarce, and prices pinch or talking up India's standing in world when rural incomes and consumption are under stress — Modi's key pitches were judged as out of whack with reality by many voters. The best demonstration of this came from UP. The state Modi made his political home gave BJP its biggest shock. Also, given that Modi's entire electoral record was built on delivering clear BJP majorities whenever he's on the ballot, his inability to take BJP past 272 will affect his brand post-results. Modi the Invincible can't apply if Modi runs a coalition govt, whose survival depends on mercurial allies like Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu. Modi has seen a different kind of India. Will India see a different kind of Modi?

RAHUL TALKED THE WALK, MANY VOTERS LISTENED

Written off any number of times since 2014 — often derisively called 'Pappu' and 'Shehzada' — Rahul Gandhi still refused to listen to party insiders who advised him to take a less combative stance. He doubled up on it and pushed many INDIA partners to join him in taking the attack to Modi. He stuck to a theme that emphasised bread-and-butter issues of ordinary voters. The two Bharat Jodo Yatras were built around these themes, and they were repeated by Rahul in rally after rally. He correctly divined that a substantial number of voters were a receptive audience for his message — even in Modi citadels like UP. It's largely to Rahul's credit that Congress is back as a player of note in the North, where BJP reigned supreme for 10 years. To be sure, Rahul has a long road to walk to reach a position where they can take BJP head on across the North. In MP and Chhattisgarh, for example, Rahul's message clearly didn't work as much it did in, say, UP. But a door has opened for Congress, and the party has its de facto leader to thank for it.

WHEN THERE'S NO WAVE, POLITICS GOES LOCAL

Pundits say no one catches an electoral wave as it's happening, all identification is with hindsight. But this time, to observers on the ground, it was clear there was no Modi wave, not even in UP when pan-national issues don't capture voter imagination, local concerns dominate voter thinking. Micro caste calculations come back into play; livelihood concerns become paramount, candidate selection assumes huge



HINDUTVA PITCH DIDN'T WORK AS WELL AS HOPED FOR

importance — in short, politics reverts to the small things that affect voters, not an abstract big idea that fires them up.

WHO'S THE BOSS OF INDIA? KING CONG, OBVIOUSLY

When the INDIA alliance was formed, heavyweights like Mamata were sceptical of the idea that Congress can lead the opposition. The alliance had other big netas, Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray, Akhilesh Yadav, MK Stalin, all of whom looked at Congress not as the leader of the group, but as a party that had lost badly in two LS elections. But it was always true that for BJP to fall short of a majority, Congress had to do much better. So, the Grand Old Party was always the key player in INDIA. Now that Congress has nearly touched the three-figure mark in LS, with excellent performances in UP and Maharashtra, there's no question who leads INDIA. Opposition regional heavyweights now need Congress to lead future fights against BJP in Parliament and in elections.

KINGMAKERS ARE BACK WITH A BANG

Coalition politics was for losers, was the mantra in 2014 and 2019. Coalitions are lifesavers, is the message from 2024. Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar, both pre-poll alliance partners of BJP, are the reason a BJP-led govt can come to office. That, reportedly, both these politicians, who have been in every kind of alliance, got calls from both sides of the political divide tells us that the old story of Indian politics — parties with few seats can make or break a govt — is firmly back. Just like in 1996, 1998, 2004 and 2009, kingmakers will demand the king does them special favours. Just like in those years, the big party — BJP in this case — will have to carefully consider allies' views before taking certain kinds of policy decisions. And, in another repeat, kingmakers will play a crucial role when it comes to allocating portfolios.

HINDUTVA CAN'T ALWAYS WIN HINDUSTAN

The consecration of the Ram temple in January was supposed to be the icing on the Hindutva cake that BJP had been carefully baking since 2014. That in UP, the

home of the mandir, BJP was beaten in LS seat count by INDIA shows that voters, while not unresponsive to Modi's messages on the majority community's cultural revival, are not prepared to entirely subsume their material concerns under Hindu 'garv'. It's not that the mandir and the larger Hindutva messaging by themselves cost BJP Hindu community votes. It's more that these campaign pitches got trumped, in crucial states, by a range of factors: fracturing of BJP's social coalitions in states like UP, angst over stagnant rural incomes in states like Maharashtra. Also, in some big states like Bengal and Tamil Nadu, which answer to cultural identities distinct from that of the North, the temple consecration didn't win significantly more support for BJP.

SCARING THE MAJORITY CAN'T GET A MAJORITY

The incumbent party made several attempts at polarising voters via subtle and not-so-subtle communally coded messaging, whether in rallies or on social media. Congress, as BJP suggested, would open the cash till for minorities, and Hindus would suffer. It didn't work in UP, where polarisation has been a tried and tested tactic. Nor in Bengal, where BJP was banking on what it saw as Hindu voters' disgruntlement over Mamata Banerjee's 'Muslim appeasement'. It didn't quite work in Karnataka, which hosts quite a few strident Hindu right politicians. Or in Rajasthan, home to many communal clashes.

MINORITIES CAN MAKE MORE THAN A MINOR DIFFERENCE

BJP and everyone else knew Muslim votes would go against it. What the party perhaps didn't reckon with was that Muslims would vote in a way that made a difference between BJP winning and losing seats, as happened in UP, where the Congress-SP alliance profited greatly. In Bengal, with Muslims solidly behind Mamata, Trinamool could concentrate on keeping its non-Muslim vote bank as intact as possible. That BJP lost seats in both states compared to 2019 showed that marginalising the minority can be a risky strategy when other negative factors are also in play.



AGNIVEER TRIPPED UP NOT JUST MANY YOUNG ASPIRANTS BUT ALSO PROVED A HURDLE FOR BJP IN HARYANA, PUNJAB

DON'T TALK ABOUT TINKERING WITH THE CONSTITUTION

Sometime after campaigning began in earnest, BJP took to reassuring voters it had no plans to change the Constitution, no plans to tinker with reservations. It was forced into this by a successful opposition campaign, which took advantage of some BJP netas' statement that 400-pair will give the party a chance to refashion the Constitution. That INDIA campaign, centered around the theme that BJP wanted to take away SC/ST reservations, clearly worked, as results especially in UP show. BJP's carefully built social coalition in the state splintered because a sizeable number of Dalits took the 'threat' to quotas seriously. BJP tried to change the game by talking about Congress's 'plans' to take away SC/OBC quotas for Muslims. But it didn't work.

IT'S THE ECONOMY, EVEN WHEN GDP IS ON A HIGH

In a country with steep income and wealth inequality, a fast-growing economy must create enough decent jobs for the macro numbers to positively impact lived realities of most citizens. That this wasn't happening was clear even from govt data, which showed self-employment and unpaid housework were two big chunks of total employment. Almost every ground report from constituencies, especially in big states like UP and Maharashtra, captured the angst of the jobless young. In Haryana and Punjab, the jobs question was sharpened by BJP govt's introduction of 4-year stints for army jawans. Agniveer is one 'reform' that cost BJP dearly. Add to all this a rural economy that had to support, post-pandemic, more people who couldn't find jobs in factories and cities, as well as a general complaint about inflation. You then have the perfect storm of dissatisfaction.

FREEBIES ARE NOT A FREE PASS IN ELECTIONS

BJP had its free foodgrain scheme, Congress promised to top it. Jagan Reddy promised the moon, so did some others — but there's no evidence that welfare schemes and/or freebies decisively impacted results anywhere this time. It's not that low-income voters don't like schemes and free stuff, it's just that once assured of delivery, more of the same gives diminishing political returns to parties. A party without promises like these would surely suffer. But when every party promises variations of the same, no one party gains substantially.

POLITICAL WASHING MACHINES DON'T ALWAYS SELL

BJP made great play of the fact that numerous opposition leaders were under corruption investigations. Two problems. One, many voters thought investigative agencies were being used in a partisan fashion by BJP's govt. Second, voters also noticed that BJP, for all its talk on being a staunch enemy of corruption, had no problem



CONSTITUTION BECAME KEY TO CONG NARRATIVE

welcoming politicians whose CVs were dominated by graft charges. That many defectors to BJP failed to win their seats is one indication that BJP's anti-corruption rhetoric didn't convince enough voters in states where they lost out most, Maharashtra and Bengal results best exemplified this.

DON'T MAKE BIG PLANS BEFORE YOU KNOW THE RESULTS

BJP heavyweights made big statements about what their govt would do once voted back to power with a majority — uniform civil code and one nation/one poll were the two big items on a future agenda. With BJP short of a majority and the opposition charged up, it can be safely assumed neither is happening anytime soon. Even for legally mandated delimitation, BJP will find the going difficult. One ally, Nitish in populous Bihar, would want it. Another ally, Naidu, from the South, wouldn't want it.

WHATSAPP ELECTION TO YOUTUBE ELECTION

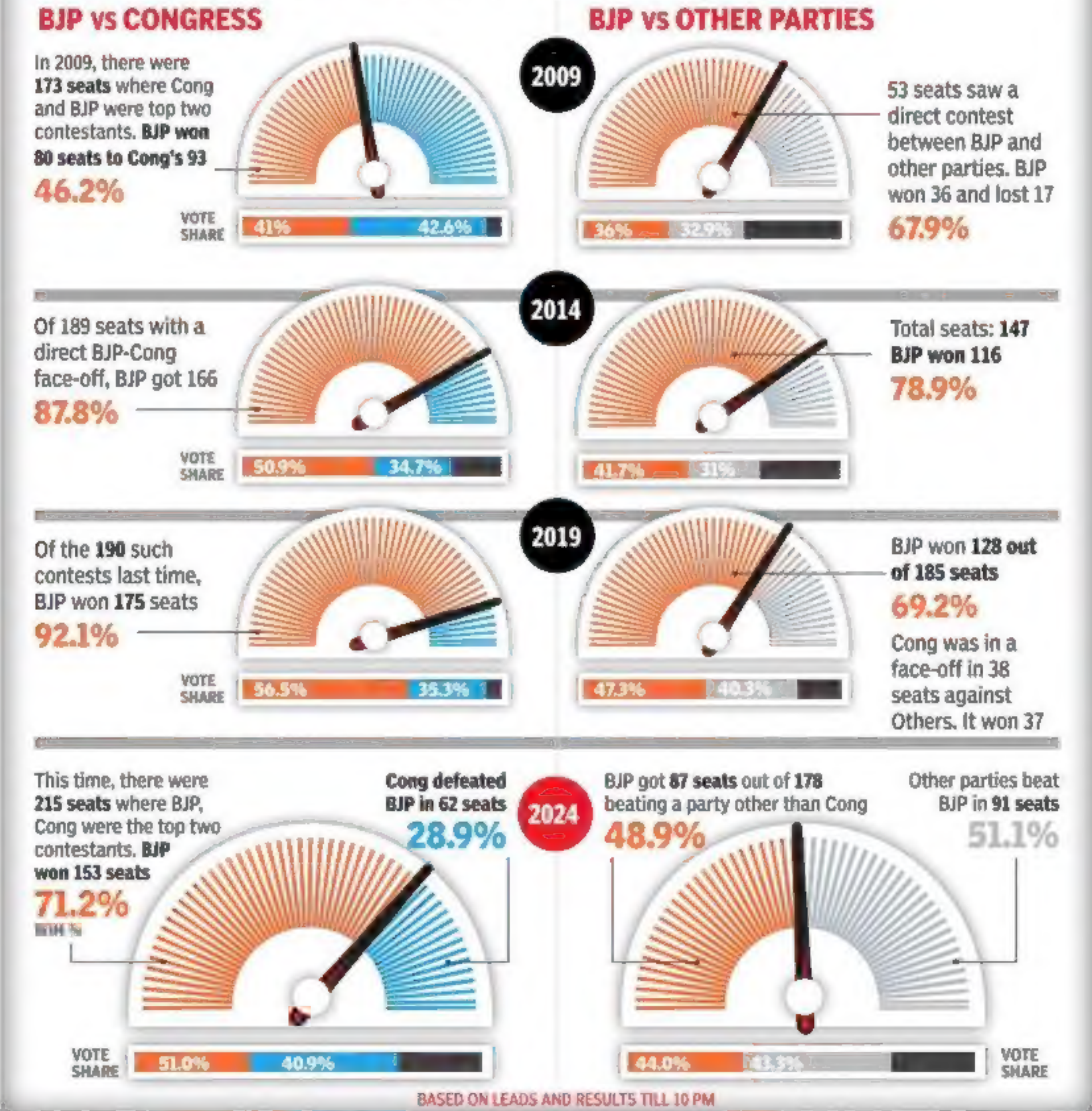
Social media, of course, played a big role in every party's campaign. But it wasn't hundreds of campaign messages in their phones that voters were hooked on. It was hundreds of videos. YouTubers, some of them with a backup team, some lone rangers, some for BJP and, crucially, some for opposition, were the big hit in these polls. BJP's overwhelming presence on news TV, which went live almost every time the party's brass was holding a rally, was countered by anti-BJP YouTubers.

EXIT POLLSTERS HEAD FOR THE EXIT

Almost every exit poll run by news TV channels gave BJP a majority bigger than 2019's and NDA a larger number of seats. Axis My India, on India Today, predicted 401 seats for NDA as the outer limit. That its head, Pradeep Gupta, broke down on live television said it all about what actual results did to the credibility of pollsters. Psephologists can get it wrong, of course. But when so many exit polls get it so spectacularly wrong, serious questions about methodology are bound to come up. News TV channels who ran these exit polls perhaps should do their own introspection.

This Time, Congress Did Better In Straight Fights Against BJP

How did the BJP fare when its main opponent was Congress? And how did it do when other parties (in the India alliance or out of it) were the primary rivals? We looked at seats where BJP finished winner or runner-up to answer those questions. This does not include seats where BJP ended up third or worse. For instance, in Kerala, BJP may have contested most seats but the main contest was between UDF and LDF except in a couple of cases. This time, Congress made a sharp recovery, securing a win percentage of close to 30% against BJP in straight fights



EVEN MODI'S BJP NEEDS THE SANGH

Reports from key states like UP, Maharashtra, Karnataka had indicated RSS karyakartas were not enthusiastically participating in BJP's campaign. Bear in mind that UP is home to the mandir. Maharashtra hosts RSS HQ and Karnataka is BJP's biggest southern base. Why the Sangh behaved in this fashion remains unclear. But RSS staying aloof seems to have made a difference to BJP's final performance. Significantly, BJP president JP Nadda had said during an interview, when asked about his party's relationship with RSS, that BJP, having grown up as an organisation, doesn't need RSS as a crucial support system. Not quite true, perhaps.

PICK YOUR FRIENDS BY ASSESSING YOUR ENEMY

Both NDA and INDIA played this smart. BJP bigshots listened to their Odisha and Andhra local units that, respectively, wanted no alliance with BJD and wanted a tie-up with TDP, not YSRCP. Those calls paid rich

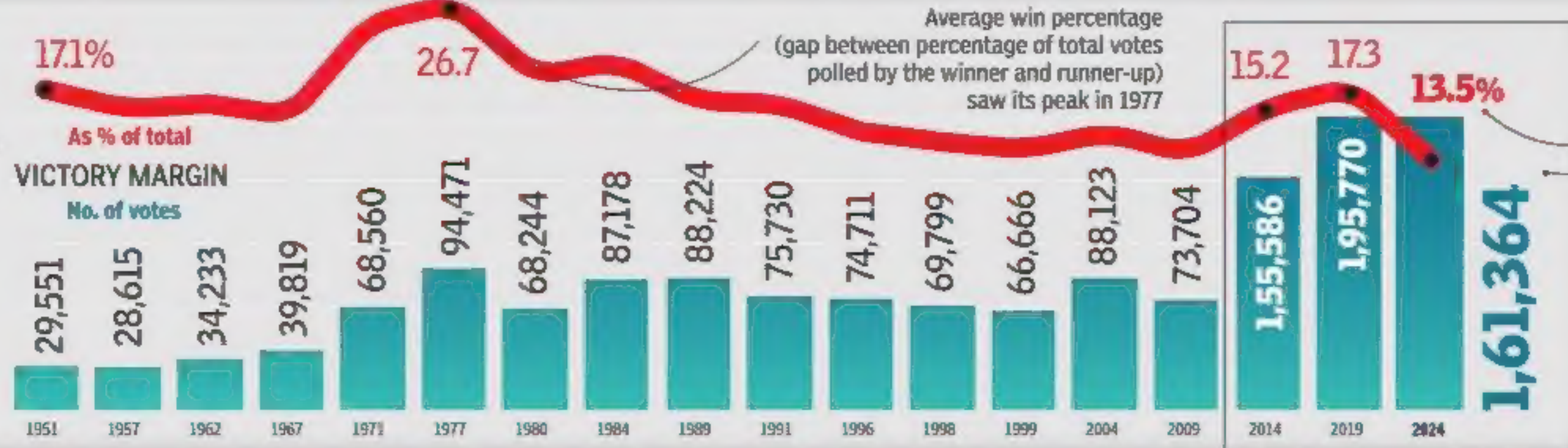
dividends. As did BJP's decision to woo Nitish back to the NDA fold just months before polls. Had BJP stuck with ADMK in Tamil Nadu, it might have been in a better position post-results. On the other side, SP tying up with Congress in UP produced this election's biggest upset. And, in Maharashtra, MVA — Congress plus NCP, Shiv Sena splinters — didn't lose heart even when it lost its govt, and it gave BJP the second biggest LS shock.

AND PICK YOUR CANDIDATES BY CONSULTING LOCAL UNITS

Observers had pointed to BJP's candidate selection in UP as a handicap. In Maharashtra, the BJP-led Mahayuti struggled to nominate candidates in some seats till the last moment. Results for BJP in both states show the wisdom of adopting a more democratic, and less centralised, way when choosing candidates. BJP has the most powerful high command. But the writ of party HQ doesn't always produce results that party bosses want.

Why 1977 & 2019 LS Polls Stand Out

Victory margins needn't be big in a first-past-the-post system. But the picture can change in case of a wave. Average win margins are a barometer of the political mood in the country. They shot up in 1977, when there was an overwhelming mandate against Emergency, and breached 1.5 lakh in the Modi wave election of 2014. They peaked at nearly 2 lakh in 2019, when Modi won a second term



MIND THE GAP: The average win margin in each seat underlines how narrow or wide Lok Sabha victories are. In 2019, when there were about 11 lakh votes cast on average in each seat, the mean difference between the winner and the second-best was 17% of votes

RIDING THEIR LAKH: Amid mostly bipolar contests between the NDA and INDIA alliances, the average margin in 2024 LS polls touched 1.6 lakh but the average per cent margin dipped from 2019

How small drop in BJP vote share led to big dent in tally

TEAM TOI

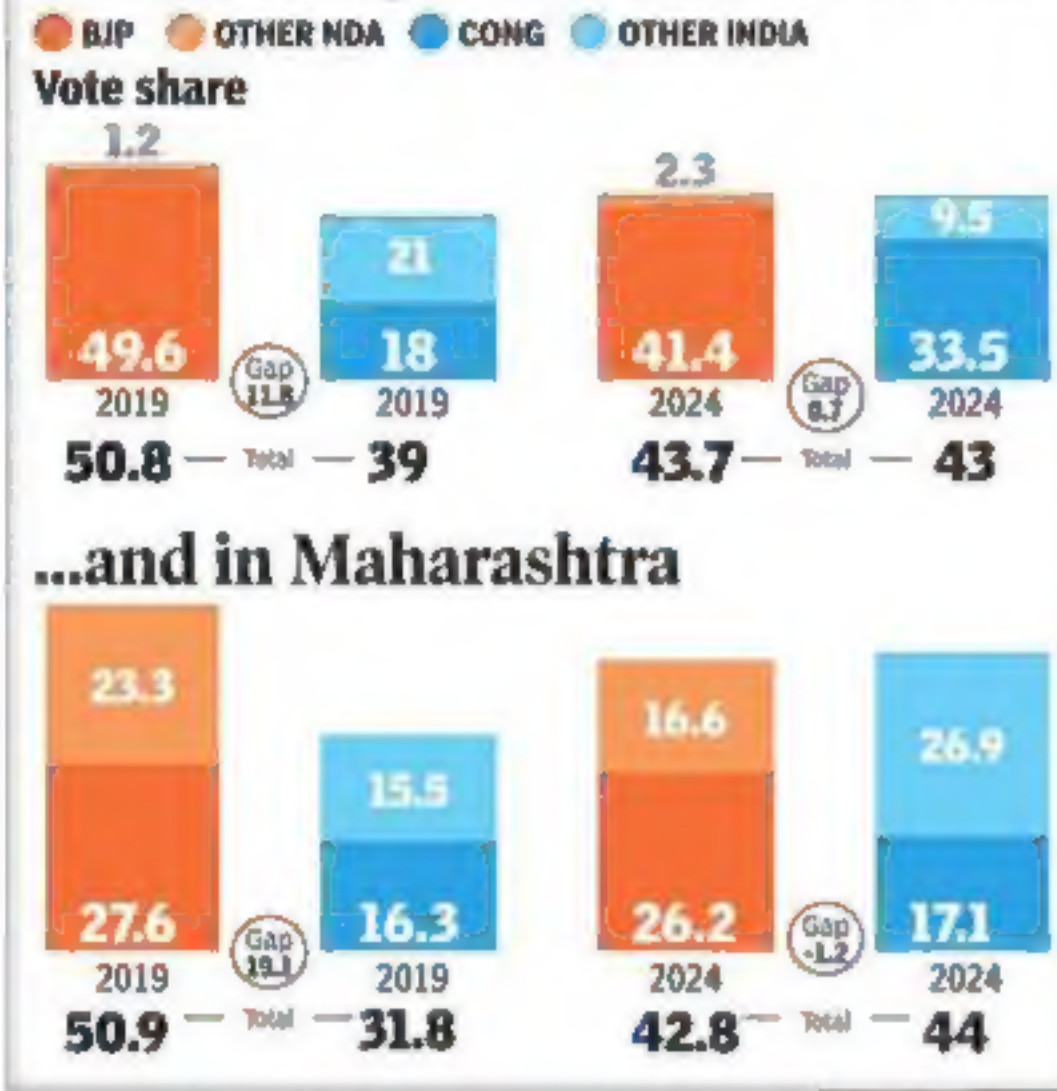
BJP saw its national vote share fall marginally from 37.3% in 2019 to 36.6% in 2024, but its seat tally dropped by 63 from 303 to 240, putting it well below the halfway mark. In contrast, Congress raised its vote share a bit from 19.5% last time to 21.2%, but that was enough to nearly double its seat tally from 52 to 99.

How could such minor changes in vote share have caused such a large variation in seat tallies? That's because the national vote share is an aggregation of states, and a party may gain vote share in a state where it is starting from such a low base that adding votes doesn't translate into winning seats while losing the same amount in a highly competitive state could cost many seats.

That is precisely what happened to BJP this time. For instance, its vote share in Tamil Nadu rose from 3.6% in 2019 to 11.2% this time, but that added nothing to its seat tally. Similarly, it went from 9.6% to 18.6% in Punjab, but in the absence of any alliance, that was not enough to win any seats, so it ended up losing the two it had.

On the other hand, a drop of about three percentage points in Bihar, from 23.6% to 20.5%, cost it five seats, while a drop of a mere 1.6 percentage points in West Bengal meant it dropped six seats.

What Changed The Game In UP...



The most dramatic instance, however, was in Maharashtra, where BJP's share dropped by just 1.4 percentage points from 27.6% to 26.2%, but that led to its winning less than half the seats it had last time (10 versus 23).

Congress presented almost a mirror image of this. In Maharashtra, a rise in vote share of less than one percentage point, from 16.3% to 17.1%, saw its seat tally jump from one to 13. In Rajasthan, it upped its vote share from 34.2% to 37.9%, and that meant winning eight seats instead of none. In UP, a rise in vote

share from 6.3% to 9.5% saw its seat tally go from one to six.

The third largest party, SP, achieved its highest tally ever of 37 in the Lok Sabha by significantly raising its vote share from 18% to 33.5%. Combined with Congress' 9.5%, the INDIA bloc in the state had a 43% vote share, making it a neck-and-neck battle with the NDA. Last time, the SP-BSP combine's 37.3% was a far cry from the NDA's 50%-plus vote share. It's this dramatic closing of the gap, which few had anticipated in the absence of BSP from the opposition alliance, that was the game changer in UP.

Where contests were direct, victory margins were the narrowest

TEAM TOI

The average margin of victory in 2024 Lok Sabha polls was about 1.6 lakh votes, but that varied significantly across states. Not surprisingly, those that were dominated by a single party or alliance saw the highest average margins while states that saw two alliances or parties going toe to toe had significantly narrower margins of victory on average.

The highest average margin among states with five or more seats was in Madhya Pradesh, where BJP made a clean sweep, at about 3.4 lakh. This was followed by Gujarat, another state with a near total saffron sweep (almost 2.8 lakh) and Uttarakhand (2.3 lakh).

On the flip side, Tamil Nadu, which saw a clean sweep by the DMK led alliance, also had margins averaging 2.2 lakh.

At the other end of the spectrum, Punjab had an average margin of just about 70,500. In UP, which saw a fierce battle between NDA and INDIA alliance, margins were on average under a lakh while Bihar and Maharashtra too were just over a lakh. Odisha was an interesting



CLOSE CALL: Ravindra Waikar

outlier: While the seat tally would indicate that it was a one-way street with BJP winning 20 of the 21 seats, the average margin was a little over a lakh, on the lower side among the larger states, suggesting that the contests were closer than the seat tallies would make us believe.

The highest margin was in Dhubri in Assam, where Rukhmin Das of the Congress polled nearly 14.7 lakh votes and beat Mohammed Badrudin Ajmal of the AIUDF by over 10 lakh votes, a new record. The lowest margin of a mere 48 votes was in Mumbai North West where a battle between the two Sena factions saw the Shinde group's candidate Ravindra Waikar just pip the UBT group's Amol Kirtikar at the post.

Mandal momentum shakes up Hindutva juggernaut

Subodh Ghildiyal
@timesgroup.com

DUO CASTE WIDER NET

Lok Sabha elections saw a decisive win for a caste-focused coalition in UP, reshaping the political landscape. This shift from religious to caste-based campaigning highlighted a significant change in voter priorities. The opposition alliance, led by SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, ran on a platform of caste census and constitutional protections, appealing primarily to Dalits and OBCs. In contrast, PM Modi's campaign centred around religious themes.

The SP-Congress coalition's win is part of a broader national trend. In Maharashtra, Congress, along with NCP and Shiv Sena, capitalised on Marathi stir and rural distress among OBCs, moving away from traditional leadership by appointing Nana Patole as party chief.

Meanwhile, DMK in Tamil Nadu emphasised social justice and countered BJP's Hindutva narrative, framing the contest as a battle between caste and communalism. In Bihar, despite BJP's alliance with JD(U), which focuses on

port base and taking advantage of BSP's decline.

After a decade of BJP's reign, Akhilesh revitalised his father Mulayam Singh Yadav's Mandalite approach, presenting himself as a youth leader advocating for backward classes, Dalits, and minorities. Congress supported this strategy, promoting a caste census and challenging the 50% quota ceiling. INDIA bloc framed the election as a fight to protect Ambedkar's Constitution, appealing to floating BSP voters. Modi responded with a vigorous campaign, accusing the opposition of intending to divert SC/ST/OBC quotas to Muslims. Despite these efforts, the elections mirrored the 1989 scenario, with caste politics again taking centre stage.

Over the years, many predicted the demise of caste-based politics in favour of economic and religious divisions. BJP was often seen as transcending caste dynamics through its religious appeal. However, these predictions underestimated the enduring significance of caste identities and their potential to reassert themselves within the political landscape.

North Gives BJP The Blues, South Sees Saffron Hues

HINDI BELT
10 states
225 seats

UP, Bihar, MP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi

THE SOUTH
5 states
132 seats

Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Andaman

A drastic drop for BJP in UP peppered the Hindi heartland — the party's bulwark since 2014 — with flecks of opposition colours though BJP did sweep MP again and won over half the seats in Rajasthan

	SEATS WON	VOTE SHARE
BJP	127	43.5%
BJP+	20	4.7%
Cong	25	21.6%
Cong+	48	18.4%

BJP doubled its tally in Telangana and, with three seats in Andhra and a historic first win in Kerala, found South to be more accommodative this time. But it ceded ground to Congress in Karnataka and failed to make a mark in Tamil Nadu

	SEATS WON	VOTE SHARE
BJP	30	23.9%
BJP+	20	10.6%
Cong	42	24.8%
Cong+	30	13.9%

OTHER 186 SEATS: From Manipur to Maharashtra, BJP's footprint shrank in states where the party and its allies virtually had saturation pickings in 2019. The opposition stole a march on BJP in Maharashtra and Congress clawed its way back in the North-East

'Wild card' entry: Samvidhan bachao narrative strikes chord with voters

TEAM TOI

The C-word was a 'wild card' entry, but at several stages of the election campaign, the Samvidhan overshadowed the regular cast of issues. Opposition was first on the draw, cleverly painting BJP's 400-paar target as a dark plot to scrap reservations by changing the Constitution. The charge blended well with Rahul Gandhi's declared intent of posing a phalanx of Muslims/OBCs/Dalits against a handful of the privileged (read upper castes/middle classes).

PM Narendra Modi launched his counter-offensive by saying it was Congress and its allies who were guilty of subverting the Constitution by extending reservations to Muslims even though faith-based quotas were not allowed.

He also dared Rahul, who would dramatically brandish a copy of the Constitution at his election rallies, to promise in writing that they would never attempt a Muslim quota again.



SAVING THE SPIRIT OF AMBEDKAR'S VISION

As the animated duel progressed, the Constitution became a talking point. This was the first time — with the possible exception of the

1977 election which, in the North, turned into a referendum on Indira Gandhi's suspension of democracy — that the Constitution had found itself in the poll arena. After the results were declared, Rahul brought up the C-word again. "The fight was to save the Constitution. We

were sure that the citizens of India would make attempts to guard it and I would like to thank everyone," he said.

Despite the sparring, there is no evidence to suggest that BJP indeed wanted to amend the Constitution. It has carved out a significant following among Dalits and OBCs, and it would be political harakiri to offend them. It is true that some in the larger Sangh Parivar consider the 42nd amendment, which inserted 'secularism' and 'socialism' in the Preamble during the Emergency, illegal, but there are no indications that the unease is shared by the BJP leadership. They would also not like to reinforce adverse perceptions at home and abroad by messing with something that has not been a deterrent in the implementation of its agenda — especially since the gap between 'letter' and 'spirit' can be creatively bridged.

Why high GDP growth did not fetch BJP electoral gains

TEAM TOI

An economy that grew 8.2% in 2023-24, following two years of high growth, would normally have been seen as an electoral asset for an incumbent govt. Not only should a majority of people have seen a rise in living standards, but the ruling party would have made it a central campaign plank. Neither of those things happened. Reason: India is facing a jobs crisis, which sharpened the bite of rising prices.

Plenty of signs showed that the inadequacy of decent jobs was a potent issue. It shouldn't have come as a surprise because official data showed that while GDP or economic output, bounced back quickly after Covid, it wasn't accompanied by commensurate growth in better quality formal jobs.

The single biggest indicator of the absence of enough job openings is the increase in the number of people classified as self-employed. In India, the high proportion of self-employed is an indicator of the weak link between GDP growth and the creation of formal jobs.

The number of self-employed people in every 100 Indians in the workforce increased between 2020 and 2021. In 2022-23, not only were 57.3% of people self-employed, but about 18.3% of them were unpaid workers in household enterprises. The number has grown at work but without pay since the pandemic, showing that a sizable number of people did not gain from the GDP growth. Not just that, almost 46% of every 100 Indians working in 2022-23 were in agriculture, a level that was higher than the year before Covid.

The absence of openings meant many who returned home to villages during lockdowns couldn't return. Agriculture is the lowest-paying and most precarious sector.

A look at losses of India where BJP lost seats, eastern UP, north Karnataka, and east Maharashtra, all poorer parts of their states, indicates that the GDP trajectory bypassed many. With stagnant incomes, the impact of inflation was aggravated even if it was not high by historical standards.

Minority community plays major role in SP & Trinamool seat surge

TEAM TOI

A significant portion of the INDIA bloc's success rests on Muslims, who voted decisively against BJP and formed a coalition with backward castes and Dalits. This restricted BJP from getting a clear majority while giving Samajwadi Party in UP and TMC in West Bengal a clear advantage.

Academics say that this is due to the combination of BJP's failed outreach towards the Pasmandas (the most socially and economically backward among Muslims) and a pushback to the anti-Muslim rhetoric during the election campaign. However, the most significant factor that enabled the backward-Muslim combine was BJP's announcement that Muslim reservation within the OBC quota would be removed.

While the BJP campaign kickstarted with 'Viksit Bharat', or an agenda for development, the discourse deteriorated soon after the first phase. Referring to PM Modi's Pasmanda outreach as "double-speak", Prof Khalid Anis Ansari, a sociologist with Azim Premji University, said, "In one speech, he would speak about Pasmandas and then call Muslims infiltrators in another speech."



CONSOLIDATION COUNTS

Modi accused TMC of appealing the "Muslim vote bank" and targeted Congress, saying they would seize Hindu property to redistribute to Muslims, accusing them of "politics of appeasement." BJP also accused ex-PM Manmohan Singh of saying that Muslims had the first right to the country's resources.

Backed into a corner, Muslims chose to vote strategically with winnability in mind. In 2019, BJP got 6% of the Muslim vote, which has decreased significantly, said CSDS associate professor Hilal Ahmed. "The election saw a smoother transfer of votes between Muslims to backward caste candidates with the bulk of the Muslim candidates of SP

and Congress winning in UP," says Asim Ali, a political researcher at the Centre for Policy Research.

In direct contests, SP's Mohiuddin won against BJP's Ghanshyam Singh Lodhi in Rampur, while Iqra Choudhary from Kairana and Afzal Ansari from Ghazipur also registered wins.

In West Bengal, TMC's Yusuf Pathan defeated Congress veteran and five-time MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury. The Muslim vote did not split towards the Left and Congress in West Bengal and to BSP in UP, as was expected by some.

This is significant, considering that the number of Muslim candidates in the 2024 Lok Sabha poll has declined. BJP fielded the sole Muslim candidate, Abdus Salam, from Kerala's Malappuram, while its ally JD(U) in Bihar gave two tickets to two candidates. Among opposition parties, too, the representation of the community has fallen.

The question of citizenship and the fear that the Muslim quota already existing at a state level in Kerala, Karnataka, and Telangana could be removed if BJP were to win 400 seats appear to have strengthened the Muslim vote. TMC used HC decision to scrap OBC certificates to considerable advantage.

No farewell to welfare: BJP may loosen purse strings

TEAM TOI

For years, PM Modi has taken a stand against rewards. Even in the run-up to polls, 'Modi ki Guarantee', BJP's manifesto, stayed clear of promises of assured pension for govt staff or restoration of rail concessions for seniors. This contrasted with Congress's moves to announce annual doles of Rs 1 lakh for women and education and farm loan waivers.

Even after Tuesday's result, which points to Modi for the first time leading a govt without an absolute majority, it is not as if there will be a U-turn. After all, Modi had refused to give free electricity as Gujarat CM. However, the reluctance to open purse strings is expected to be far less, more so because demands are going to rise from voters, NDA allies.

The approach will remain calibrated. So, BJP and its allies, while steering clear of guaranteeing MSP for farmers or reworking the formula, will be more generous in increasing the price. Besides, the Centre, which was reluctant to increase the PM-KISAN annual payout from Rs 6,000 announced five years ago, will be more open to it.

Ahead of polls, Modi govt focused on filling up vacancies in govt. That's something that is expected to get a fillip given that jobs have been a key poll issue. The Union Budget, which is expected in mid-July, will lay out the roadmap.

State Of Giving

Some key schemes that Centre & states are offering

WHAT CENTRE GIVES	Concessional loans for tiny businesses (Mudra), street vendors (PM-Svanidhi)
Free foodgrains for 81 cr BPL beneficiaries	
Ayushman Bharat, health insurance scheme for poor	
Free gas connections, subsidised cylinders under PM Ujjwala	
PM-Kisan: ₹6,000 cash transfer to farmers	
WOMEN	POWER
KARNATAKA (CONG) Gruha Lakshmi: ₹2,000 per month to women heads of families	PUNJAB (AAP) 300/mth units free
ANDHRA (YSRCP) Amma Vodi: ₹15,000 per year for mothers of school-going kids. ₹18,500/yr for women aged 45-60	K'TAKA 200 units free
T'GANA (CONG) Free bus rides*	ANDHRA Free for agriculture
TN (DMK) Kalaigarn Magalir Urimai Thittam: ₹1,000/mth to women heads of households	T'GANA 200 units free
MP (BJP) Ladli Behna: ₹1,250/mth to 1.3cr women	UP Free for tubewells
UP (BJP) Kanya Sumangala Yojana: ₹25,000 for girls from birth to graduation	DELHI (AAP) 200 units free, 50% subsidy for 201-400 units
WB (TMC) Lakshmi Bhandar: ₹1,000/mth (₹1,200 for SC/ST) for women	FOOD
Kanyashree Prakalpa: ₹1,000/yr for school-, college-going girls (13-18 yrs)	K'TAKA Cash for 5kg rice for BPL cardholders
Rupashree Prakalpa: ₹25,000 one-time marriage grant	TN Free breakfast for Class I-IV govt school students
*Karnataka, TN, Telangana, Delhi also offer free bus rides to women	DELHI 20,000 litres of free water per month for households

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60 Years Later, Another Triple

Jawaharlal Nehru
PM | 15 Aug 1947 to 27 May 1964Narendra Modi
PM | Since 26 May 2014

1ST TERM	2ND TERM	3RD TERM	1ST TERM IN LS	2ND TERM	3RD TERM
Allahabad cum Jaunpur (2-member seat) Cong 364 seats 45% votes	Phulpur (2-member seat, Cong's Masuriya Din second again) 371 seats 47.8% votes	Phulpur (1 member seat) 361 seats 44.7% votes	Valudara 72.8% votes BJP 282 seats 31.3% votes	Varanasi 56.4% votes 303 seats 37.7% votes	Varanasi 63.6% votes 240 seats 36.6% votes

Despite a far tighter election than expected, Modi is set to head a govt for the third time. What's different this time for the former three-time Gujarat chief minister is managing mercurial allies, and a belligerent opposition in Parliament

3-time
CM
PM

LONGEST-SERVING HEADS OF ELECTED GOVT

Narendra Modi	8,277 days
Jawaharlal Nehru	6,130
Indira Gandhi	5,829
Manmohan Singh	3,656
Morarji Desai	2,511
AB Vajpayee	2,272
Narasimha Rao	2,229
Rajiv Gandhi	1,857

Number of days served as Prime Minister as well as chief minister
As on June 4

Man With Modified Mandate

In a waveless election, 400-paar proved to be an unrealistic target. But while the Teesri Manzil has many challenges ahead such as fickle allies, Modi is no stranger to pressure

Team TOI

In their post-results comments, opposition leaders — from Rahul Gandhi to Mamata Banerjee — described BJP's failure to score a majority of its own as PM Narendra Modi's defeat. This was to be expected, considering that the entire NDA's campaign (TDP being a partial exception), was framed around him. His energetic campaign only served to enhance his personal liability. But while results clearly suggest that the law of politics has caught up with him, he has still pulled off a feat which most incumbents in democracy can only dream of.

Modi is going to be only the second PM after Jawaharlal Nehru to have secured a third term. In fact, his achievement may be considered even bigger because it comes in a political milieu that is polarised, fragmented and far more competitive than the one Nehru had to reckon with. Moreover, Nehru also had the advantage of having been blessed by none other than Mahatma Gandhi, and being leader of a party that basked in the glow of being the vanguard of the freedom movement. In contrast, Modi arrived as dissent; a challenger to the mainstream.

Coming back to 2024, while the tally of 243 looks like a nose-dive both from the standards of the 400-paar campaign as well as the widely held perception of the polls being a no-contest, this is the best to have been posted by any non-BJP party since 1984 when Congress rode the massive sympathy wave generated by Indira Gandhi's assassination.

However, the setback has brought to fore issues like price rise and unemployment which emerged as warning signs during the campaign but were seen as minor irritants because of the as-



sumption, wrong and smug as it turned out to be, that an absolute majority was already in the bag. Although Modi did a good job of containing inflation, the assumption that voters would go only by the sincerity of intent, while also taking into account the international pattern of runaway inflation, turned out to be wrong.

Modi pushed for expansion of public infrastructure and generation of employment in the informal sector. The calculation that this, along with the post-Covid push for filling up vacancies in central govt jobs, would help assuage the concern about jobs did not come to pass.

The retention of sitting BJP MPs, despite internal surveys and

Modi has negotiated several obstacles in the past. And despite the apparent diminution, he will be tackling another term with strengths few others can boast of

cadre feedback flagging their unpopularity, was another big and avoidable mistake.

The 400+ target, which was supposed to convey strength and self-

assuredness, also boomeranged, with the opposition saying this was part of a design to change the Constitution and scrap quotas.

The counter-manoeuver by Modi in the form of an aggressive pitch against Muslim quota did not work as Hindus voted along caste lines. If anything, it gave an opening to his opponents to renew the charge that he was divisive and desperate. This may have caused consternation to the moderates among his supporters.

The resultant reduction in seats has turned the third term into a challenge. Apart from a stronger opposition which is going to be more aggressive, Modi also has to contend with allies like N Chan-

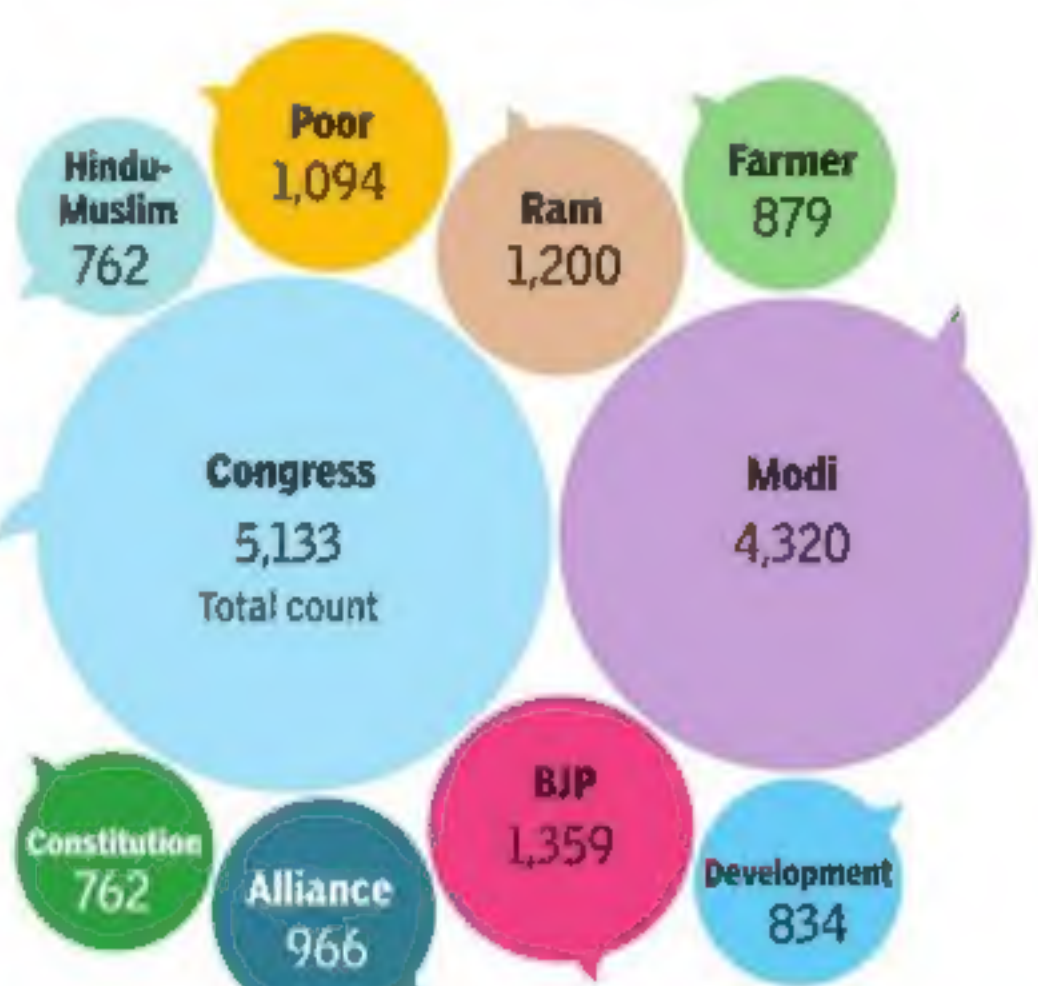
drababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar, who are not in sync with the themes on BJP's agenda and may act as restraint. At the same time, RSS will also be keeping a wary eye on how he deals with pressure from allies.

But Modi is not alien to struggles. His career is essentially that of negotiating challenges and taking them on at the opportune moment. And, despite the apparent diminution, he will be approaching one with strengths that few can boast of. BJP's numbers, although reduced, are also a testimony to the goodwill and credibility he enjoys in an age when loyalties are short-lived and fleeting, and goodwill evaporates in the heat of ever-escalating expectations. This is the main reason why BJP could survive the 'caste' and 'consolidation' card played so adroitly by the opposition. His credentials as a 'staunch nationalist' are considered beyond reproach, and the massive upgrade of public infrastructure that happened under his leadership is a lived and real experience that may be appreciated again now that resentments have been vented. The robust exchequer is going to be a strength. Addressing the concerns of Dalits and OBCs cannot be beyond a leader and a party which has been more sensitive to caste sentiments than the older BJP.

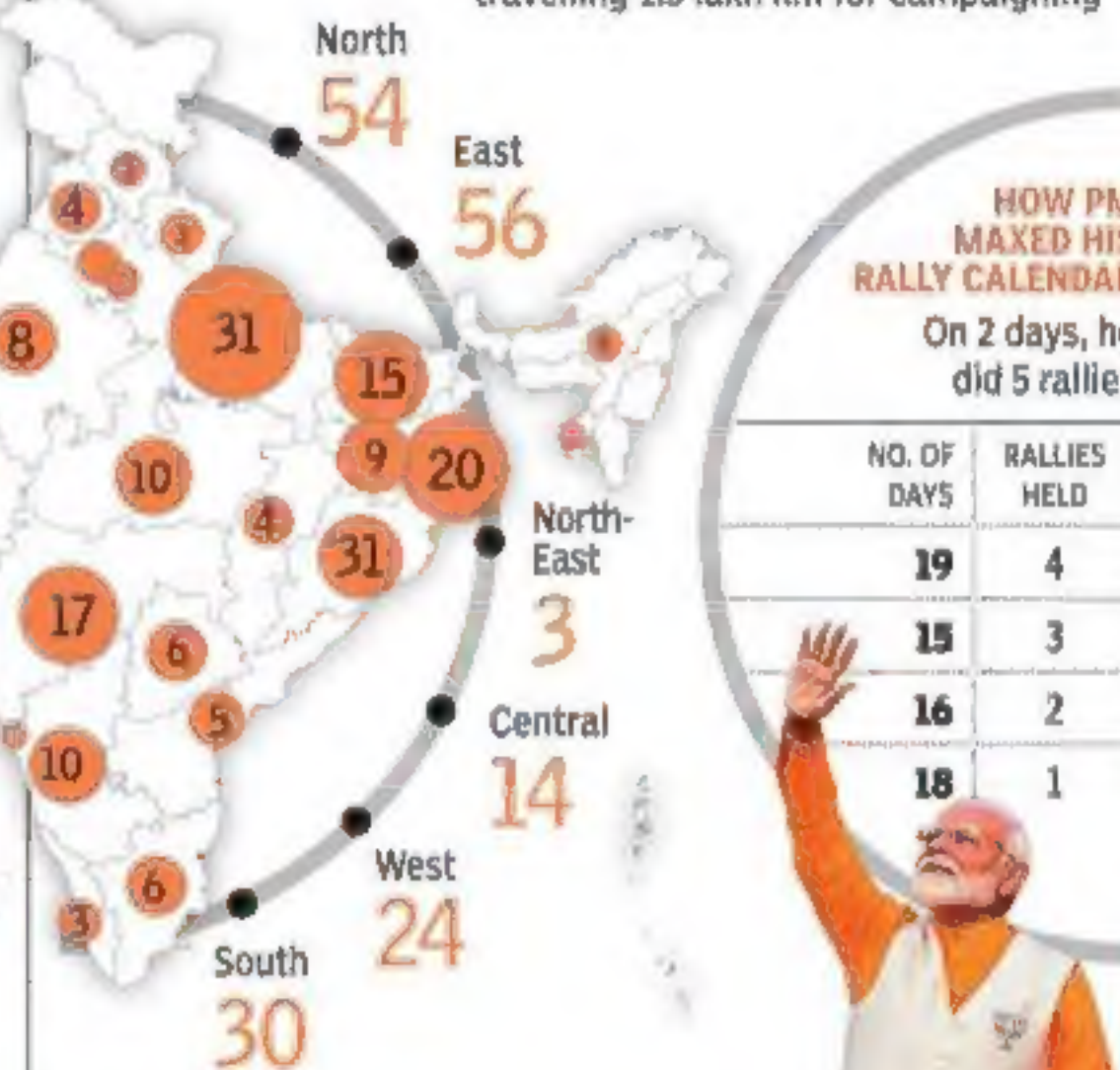
The third term is going to be his legacy term, and Modi will leave no stone unturned to ensure it is remembered for accomplishments rather than as a weak arrangement. Going by his track record, he may not like to let the challenges become an alibi for non-performance, and a stint which dwarfs the memory of his achievements in the first two terms. Conclusions about decline may yet turn out to be premature.

Pollspeak: Top 10 Words

An analysis of Modi's campaign speeches (from Mar 16 to May 30) reveal some powerful patterns that drove his message home to voters

181
RALLIES & ROADSHOWS180
NO. OF CONSTITUENCIES COVERED

Varanasi is the only constituency where Modi had both a rally and a roadshow. In 2019, he had attended 142 rallies, travelling 1.3 lakh km for campaigning



HOW PM MAXED HIS RALLY CALENDAR
On 2 days, he did 5 rallies

NO. OF DAYS	RALLIES HELD
19	4
15	3
16	2
18	1

Not so 'Upyogi'? Results reversal comes as reality check for UP CM

Team TOI

The setback that BJP has received in UP, has come as a stunning reality check for Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The Yogi factor — a combination of strong law and order, development and aggressive Hindutva — which was a strong pitch used by BJP in addition to the Modi factor appeared to find resonance on the ground during the campaign. But the 'double engine' faltered this time around and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav's catchphrase 'PDA' targeting Picchade (backwards), Dalits and Alpankhyak (minorities) had a deeper connect with voters, especially Dalits and backward.

Yogi has spearheaded BJP's consecutive victories in five back-to-back elections in the state — 2017 and 2022 state polls, 2019 Lok Sabha elections and two local body polls before the reversal of the trend. "Since Yogi had been credited with the wins, he will have to take the responsibility for the dismal show also," says a political observer, adding "but he cannot be made a scapegoat."

The selection of candidates was done ignoring anti-incumbency and brewing resentment against them and has emerged as one of the main reasons for the loss. A party insider said that Yogi stands clear as the candidate selection responsibility rested with the central leadership.

"Yogi is seen as a saviour for BJP. He had no say in the selection of candidates. Those who won despite the brewing anger against them will definitely credit Yogi's contribution along with the Modi factor when they introspect the reasons for their success," he added.

In every election rally that he addressed in UP this time, PM Narendra Modi not only praised the Yogi model of law and order that prepared a conducive atmosphere for investment in the state, but also highlighted his development initiatives.

In his quest to get improved numbers, he knows which is the most crucial "engine" he could have banked on. "However, this 'double engine' narrative failed to attract voters in the state. This could be because it is a much-flogged slogan and Yogi has reached the halfway mark of the second term of his govt," says another analyst.



TAMISHED HALO? Though he had little say in candidate selection, the lack of trust of minorities in his govt played a role in the loss

To his credit, he was one of the most sought-after campaigners for the party, having addressed nearly 170 rallies — not only in UP but also outside. Before that, he had already visited all 75 districts. But it clearly was not enough and his position in the party's top echelon will take a beating. The extent could be a matter of debate.

Since Yogi had been credited with earlier victories, he will have to take responsibility for the dismal show. But he cannot be made a scapegoat either

However, the narrative set by Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal in the middle of the campaign is back in discussion. While addressing rallies, Kejriwal claimed that after BJP's win, Yogi will be removed like several other BJP CMs. According to UP watchers, the Delhi CM tried to create a fake narrative that all was not well within the BJP and the top leadership was wary of Yogi because of his growing popularity and it might have impacted a section of voters.

"Although he was playing on Yo-

gi's popularity, giving a message to the latter's admirers and voters that if you vote for the saffron party, your 'favourite' CM would be dispensed with, BJP came out with a rebuttal. However, with BJP losing ground in these polls, this narrative is bound to return to haunt the party," says a BJP insider.

His name also came up during discussions around Thakur protests during the election. The hype around the protest likely affected the party's prospects, especially in the first two rounds. "But he was not alone. UP BJP's inability to assess the intensity of the protest will also be discussed in the same breath," the analyst says and adds it was because of Yogi that the extent of damage was curtailed. Seats won by BJP do reflect the same, he further says.

While Yogi is in the third year of his second tenure and his welfare measures have reached the last strata of the society, his govt is yet to earn the trust of the minority community, as apparent from the voting pattern. "This would be a task cut out for his govt to bridge that gap," says a political analyst.

However, while making the governance more robust, the Yogi govt must be wary of its image as being "over-dependent" on bureaucracy. "Ignoring party workers and people's representatives was a reason quoted for the lack of enthusiasm among party cadre," he adds.

Himanta: Will N-E star campaigner lose sheen?

Prabin Kalita@timesgroup.com

Lok Sabha election results present a complex picture for Himanta Biswa Sarma. Assam chief minister and key architect of BJP's vision in the North-East.

Despite his significant role in BJP's national campaigns, the party's and NDA's performance in the North-East, especially in Manipur, raise questions about his future trajectory. In his home state of Assam, the party retained the same tally as 2019 but failed to improve its performance.

While Sarma wasn't directly involved in campaigning in the North-East, except Assam, the region's electoral outcomes now raise questions about his ability to deliver in his own backyard.

BJP's decision to deploy Sarma outside the region, leaving the regional leadership to manage their own campaigns, can be interpreted as a strategic move to utilise his skills on a national platform, potentially grooming him for a larger role within the party. Conversely, it could also suggest a deliberate distancing from the complexities of the North-East, especially given the sensitive political climate and BJP's mixed record in the region.

This can be a crucial juncture in Sarma's political future. While his national profile within BJP has undoubtedly risen, the party's setbacks, especially in Manipur, might lead to a reassessment of his influence and standing within the party. Whether the central leadership continues to repose the same level of trust in him, and how they choose to utilize his political capital in the future, remains to be seen.

Sarma's political journey started with the Congress party. However, he lost his first assembly election in 1996. But that did not obstruct his

FUTURE TENSE? Setbacks in his backyard raise questions

quick rise through the ranks, holding important ministerial portfolios in the Assam government. Recognising the shifting political winds, he made a decisive move to the BJP in 2015, a decision that proved instrumental in the party's historic victory in Assam the following year.

In the run-up to the 2016 Assam assembly elections, Sarma proved his mettle as BJP's most dependable backroom strategist. His deft maneuvering facilitated the defection of nine Congress MLAs to BJP, providing a significant boost to the party's prospects. This strategic move paid dividends, as BJP tasted its first electoral victory in Assam, a state long considered a Congress bastion.

Recognising Sarma's contributions, then BJP president Amit Shah entrusted him with the pivotal role of convener of the newly formed North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA). This miniature version of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) brought together almost all the regional parties of the North-East under a unified umbrella, solidifying the BJP's foothold in the region.

Sarma's strategic prowess continued to bear fruit as BJP secured the defection of 43 Congress MLAs in Arunachal Pradesh, paving way for formation of the party's government in the state. This remarkable feat was followed by BJP's first government in Manipur and historic ousting of the formidable Left Front in Tripura, a state where they had held sway for decades.

A wave of political change swept across North-East, with Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram also witnessing the formation of NEDA/NDA governments.

However, now there are new twists to this success story.



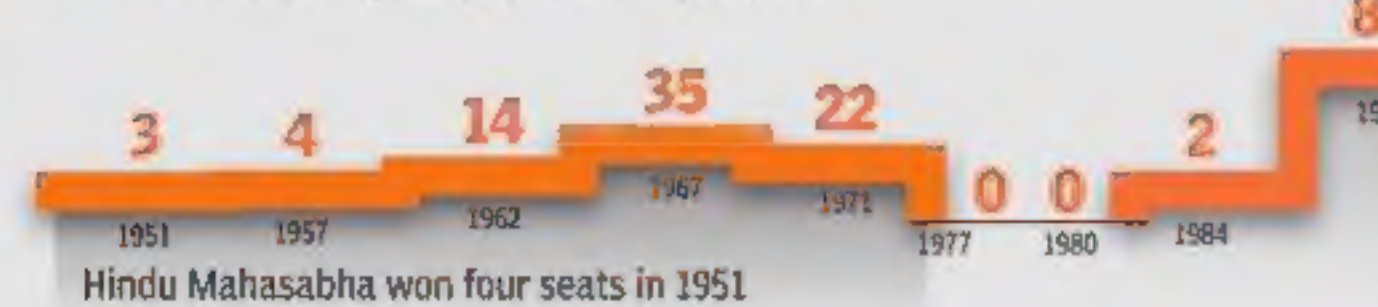
Some of the world's longest-serving leaders

Having won a third term, Modi joins the club of leaders who have served the longest stints in office*

*Leaders from 20th century and from democracies with free and fair elections

From 3 Seats To Triple-Digit Tallies

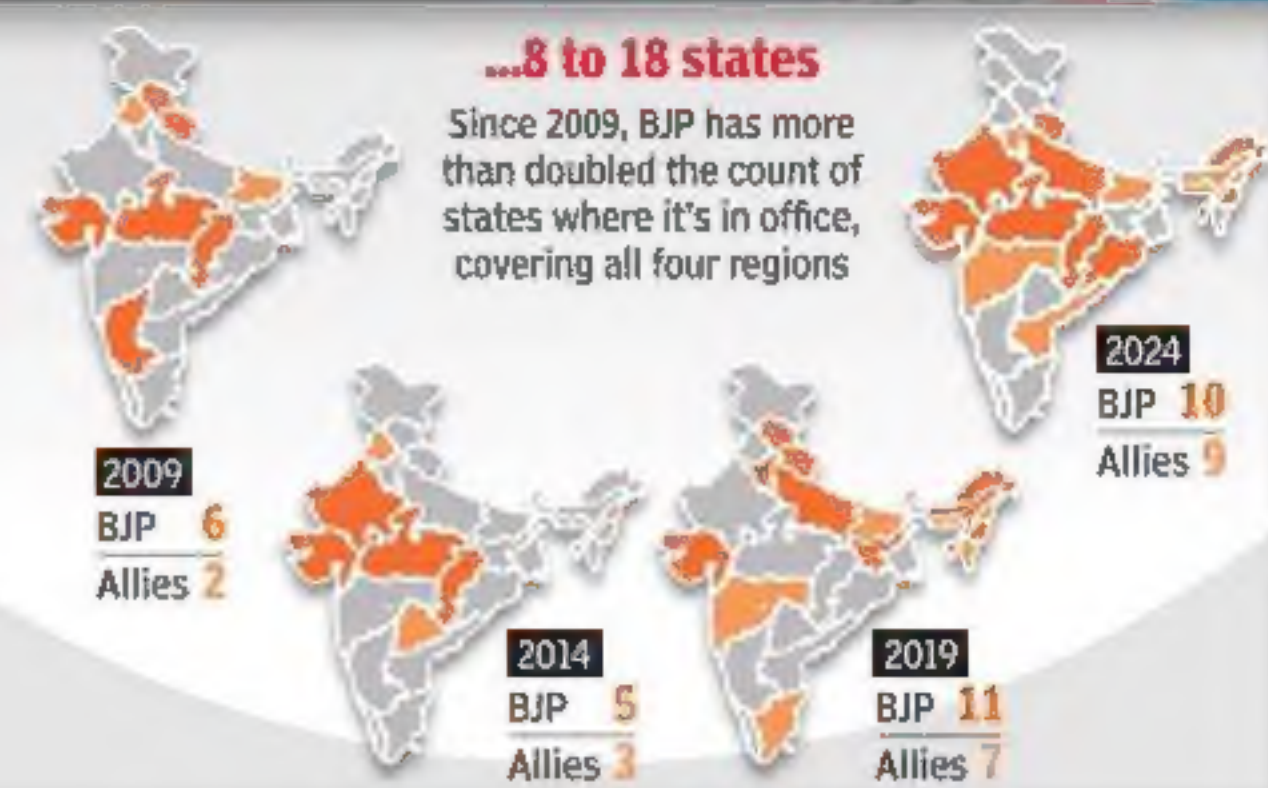
BJP's forerunner, Bharatiya Jana Sangh, won three seats in the first Lok Sabha election — two in West Bengal, one in Rajasthan. The erstwhile party hit its peak tally of 35 in 1967, when Deen Dayal Upadhyay was its president



Zero seats for Jana Sangh in 1977 and 1980 is because the party had merged with the Janata Party during this period

BJP was formed in April 1980 and contested its first parliamentary election in 1984. Between mid-80s and late 90s, it grew the fastest — from 2 seats to 182

Before 2014, BJP-led NDA was in office at the Centre for six years between 1998 and 2004 under Vajpayee. Led by Modi, it won a majority on its own in 2014 and 2019 but fell short this time, though it emerged as the largest party



Not Keeping Ear To The Ground Hurt BJP

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Buoyed by the successful delivery of its poll promises in the past ten years, BJP approached the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as a no-contest but ended up committing mistakes like repeating incumbent MPs despite adverse ground feedback against them and also roping in candidates from different parties disregarding cadres' sentiment, leading to indifference from them.

Unlike the usual practice — a successful one — of replacing sitting MPs to contain local anti-incumbency, the party brass repeated most candidates, which is seen as a critical contributor to the defeat of many of them,

mainly in Uttar Pradesh, where the party had the most at stake and was expecting to make gains since SP and BSP were contesting separately. Also going for the party was the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, and the 'law and order' plank of the Yogi Adityanath govt was expected to work in its favour.

The drafting of 'outsiders', many of them 'tainted', resulted in the 'anti-corruption' plank losing its sheen without bringing in compensatory advantages.

While the opposition inflicted severe damage in UP by using the caste card to thwart the growing consolidation of Hindus, BJP took time to respond to signs of unease among influential communities like Jats, Meenas and the Rajputs.



SWEEPING PROBLEMS UNDER THE CARPET

The claim of opposition parties that Yogi Adityanath would be replaced as Uttar Pradesh chief minister added

to an avoidable problem. Besides, there were reports of poor coordination within the party organisation over

the selection of candidates. Differences among party leaders over alliances with local outfits like Suheldev Bha-

ratiya Samaj Party in eastern UP were a known secret.

There were reports that a section of RSS was unhappy at how tickets were distributed and 'outsiders' were given preference while ignoring old party cadres, taking away the advantage the saffron party has enjoyed over grassroots Sangh volunteers handling 'door-to-door' part of the campaign. BJP president JP Nadda's alleged statement on ties with RSS — "we have grown more capable" — coming ahead of the fifth phase seems to have done further damage even as the party chief clarified that he was "misquoted".

The damage could have been more severe if the leadership had not taken a few 'unexpected' calls, such as shedding 'frenemy' fights

with regional parties like YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh and Biju Janata Dal in Odisha; but decisions delivered dividends for the party and helped it retain its position as the single largest party, which makes it the first claimant to form the govt. It responded positively to Nitish Kumar when he wanted to return to NDA and, as a result, could blunt the 'caste card' that worked to its disadvantage in Uttar Pradesh.

After several rounds of meetings, BJP succeeded in forging an alliance with Telugu Desam Party (TDP) at the cost of its arrangement with YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh. The coalition swept both LS and assembly polls in the state.

The party brass took a different stand in Odisha and emerged as the key chal-

lenger to the hegemony of Biju Janata Dal chief Naveen Patnaik as the saffron party gained a majority in state polls and a landslide in Lok Sabha elections, winning 19 out of 21 seats there.

Another 'course correction' after the debacle in the Karnataka assembly elections was reinstating veteran leader BS Yediyurappa as the party won 19 seats despite a rout in the state polls just a few months ago. Following Yediyurappa's removal as Karnataka chief minister, there was dissent and dissatisfaction within the party. However, his son Vijayendra's appointment as state unit president in Nov last year significantly addressed any reservations while the tie-up with JD(S) turned out to be valuable.

Faizabad: Mandir no guarantee of mandate

TEAM TOI

The construction of Ram temple and BJP's campaign around consecration of Ram Lalla's idol in Jan, just months ahead of Lok Sabha polls, did not reap the dividends that the party had hoped for.

BJP stalwart Lallu Singh failed to win Faizabad, the parliamentary constituency of which Ayodhya is a part, against Samajwadi Party's Awadesh Prasad, who won by a margin of over 54,000 votes.

Prasad, a nine-time MLA and one of the founding members of SP, was locked in a close fight with two-time MP Lallu Singh till Tuesday afternoon as votes were counted.

It was from 1.30pm that Prasad's lead kept inching upwards, before he was announced as the winner. While Prasad reached the counting venue after offering prayers at Hanumangarhi temple, Lallu Singh did not turn up at all.

TEMPLE RUN

A Dalit candidate, Prasad was fielded by Samajwadi Party on a general seat. The party's gamble paid off as over 2.5 lakh Passis in the constituency appear to have backed him.

The saffron camp lost all four other Lok Sabha constituencies in the Ayodhya division — Ambedkarnagar, Barabanki, Sultanpur and Amethi.

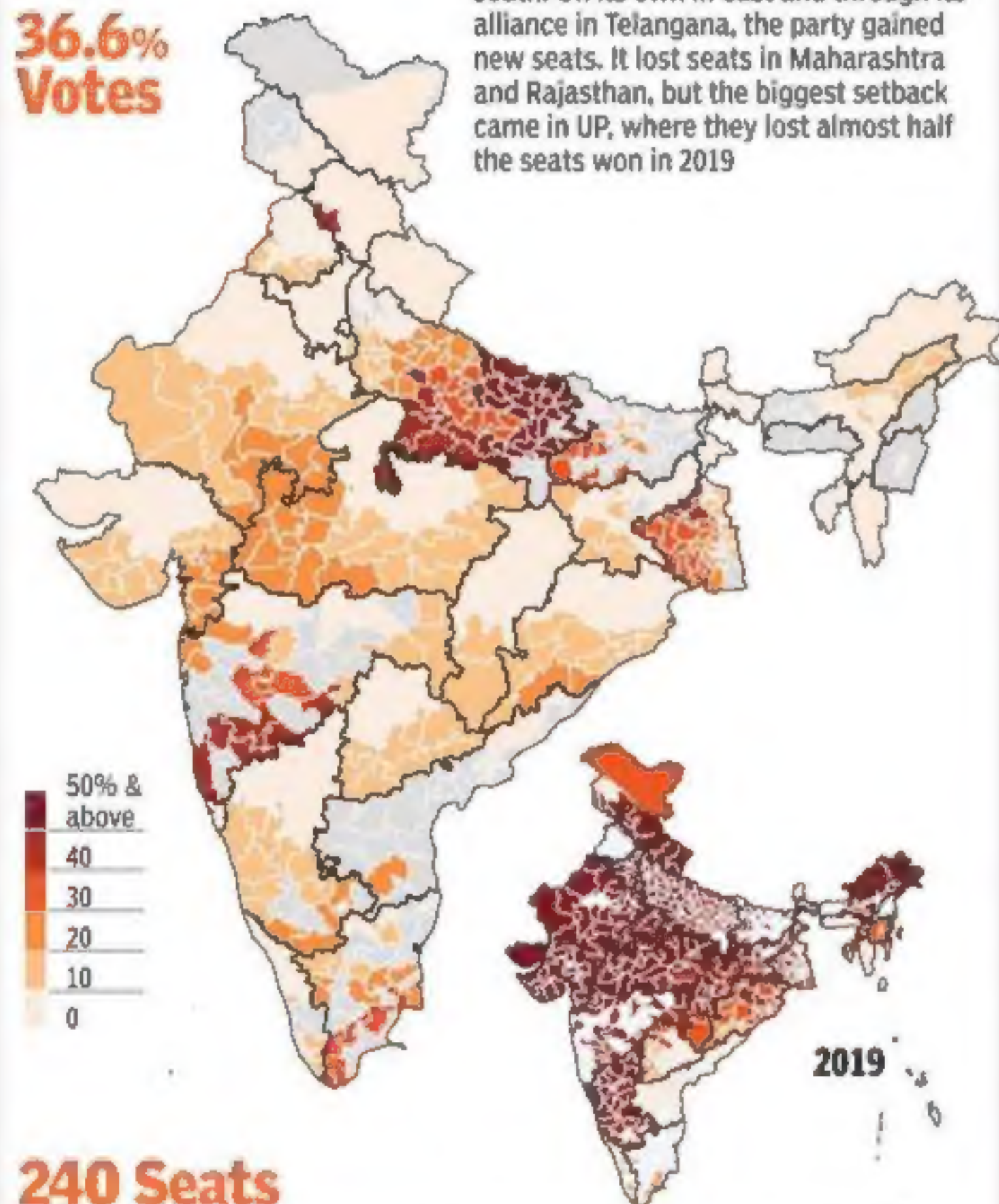
In Barabanki, voters elected Congress candidate Tanuj Punia, while SP's Lalji Verma, a seasoned politician, won from Ambedkarnagar.

A big upset came in Sultanpur, where BJP's senior parliamentarian Maneka Gandhi lost to SP's Rambhual Nishad. And in Amethi, Union women and child development minister Smriti Irani lost to debutant and Gandhi family loyalist Kishori Lal Sharma.

BJP had won Barabanki, Faizabad and Sultanpur seats in 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections. BSP's Ritesh Pandey had held Ambedkarnagar in the 2019 polls. This time, Pandey fought from the seat as a BJP candidate but lost to Verma by over 1.37 lakh votes.

How BJP Barely Hung On In A Wave-Less Election

2024
36.6%
Votes



Compared to 2019, geographical spread of BJP's performance changed in east and south. On its own in east and through its alliance in Telangana, the party gained new seats. It lost seats in Maharashtra and Rajasthan, but the biggest setback came in UP, where they lost almost half the seats won in 2019

240 Seats

Telangana and Andhra are two states where the party posted gains that many hadn't expected it to. UP and Maharashtra delivered a blow to their hopes of landing a third straight term on their own. The number of states where BJP has all MPs is down to five — MP, Himachal, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Arunachal

	2009	2014	2019	2024
Andhra Pradesh	0	2	0	3
Assam	4	7	9	9
Bihar	12	22	17	12
Chhattisgarh	10	10	9	10
Goa	1	2	1	1
Gujarat	15	26	26	24
Haryana	0	7	10	5
Himachal Pradesh	3	4	4	4
Jammu & Kashmir	0	3	3	2
Jharkhand	8	12	11	8
Karnataka	19	17	25	17
Madhya Pradesh	16	27	28	29
Maharashtra	9	23	23	10

	2009	2014	2019	2024
Delhi	0	7	7	7
Odisha	0	1	8	19
Punjab	1	2	2	8
Rajasthan	4	25	24	14
Telangana	0	1	4	8
Tamil Nadu	0	1	0	8
Tripura	0	0	2	2
Uttar Pradesh	10	71	62	33
Uttarakhand	0	5	5	5
West Bengal	1	2	18	12
Other UTs	3	4	2	2
Northeast	0	1	3	2

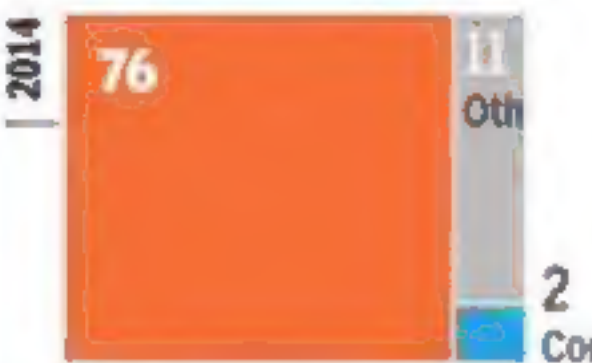
Wave tally doesn't include Assam and J&K | Source: EC

BJP KEEPS ONLY HALF OF MODI WAVE SEATS

There were 89 seats where BJP's vote share rose by at least 20% in 2014, over 2009. Let's call these Modi Wave seats. In our base year of 2009, it had won only 5 of these seats



In five years, it increased its takings 15-fold, mainly at Cong's expense



In 2019, other parties shaved off some seats from BJP but Cong slid further



BJP's 2014 'wave' pickings were halved in 2024 with SP taking 20 and Cong wresting 11 seats

Saffron citadels breached as INDIA finds Uttar

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Despite inroads in a few states, the resounding win that BJP was expecting to form a govt for a third term ran into obstacles in some of the party's stronghold states.

The most brutal blow for BJP came from Uttar Pradesh, the state with most Lok Sabha constituencies (80). Here, the party managed to win just 33, a far cry from its 2019 tally of 62 seats in the state.

This dent ensured that BJP failed to get a majority on its own, so much so that PM Modi's win margin in Varanasi fell to 1.5 lakh votes this time. His most-targeted rival, Rahul Gandhi, who lost his family citadel Amethi in 2019, pulled off a victory by a margin of 4.8 lakh votes in Rae Bareilly — a statement that the opposition planned to bring home to BJP.

If UP, even after the high-pitched Ram mandir inauguration, failed to vote overwhelmingly for BJP, it was Rajasthan — which overturned a Congress govt and brought BJP to office only last Nov — that refused to deliver 24 of the 25 seats for the saffron camp as it did in 2019. Congress snatched a big chunk of 11

BJP TALLY BY REGION



seats, with BJP leading in 14.

Though opposition did not fare as well as it expected in Bihar, BJP lost five seats to INDIA bloc. The party retained all but one seat in Chhattisgarh, which has 11 LS seats. It maintained its number in Gujarat and improved its tally in MP, sweeping all 29 seats in the state, including Chhindwara this time (the constituency is a Kamal Nath bastion, and his son Nakul Nath won the seat for Congress in 2019).

Among its stronghold states, BJP's 'voterloo' was

Maharashtra in many ways. It was the state where BJP tried all its tricks to fell an elected Shiv Sena-Congress-NCP govt, break Sena and NCP, and take some Congress functionaries for its own coalition. Voters avenged this backdoor govt by reducing BJP's seats to ten from 23 in 2019.

This general election has ensured that BJP cannot form a govt by itself. It has to bank on pre-poll allies, and Modi must go with Nitish Kumar, Eknath Shinde and Chandrababu Naidu and others if he forms govt.

New territories help BJP compensate for losses

TEAM TOI

Having saturated its seat share in the party's stronghold states in the north and west in 2019, BJP was looking to recover ground it could lose to 10 years of anti-incumbency from new territories. But its aggressive Mission South and East left it with both tangible and intangible gains.

First, the disappointment. BJP was unable to add more seats to its 2019 tally of 29 of the 130 Lok Sabha seats it won in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in

the results declared on Tuesday. However, it successfully carved out a new base for itself in the south beyond Karnataka among two Telugu states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. It has also debuted in Kerala by winning its first ever seat.

While it has shown that the four seats it won in Telangana in 2019 was not a chance occurrence, it has for the first time won three seats in Andhra Pradesh by tying up with the TDP, a party with which it had much bad blood over the past five years. Letting bygones be bygones has allowed it to break new ground. This ensured that the seats it lost

in Karnataka were made up for from Telangana and AP.

In the east, West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress dealt a blow to BJP's plans of gaining beyond its 2019 tally of 18 and take it to 25-odd seats. TMC has wrestled six seats back from BJP and taken its own score to 29 LS seats.

The best news for BJP came in from Odisha, where the saffron party has swept the state by winning 19 of the 21 LS seats, reducing ruling BJD to just one seat, alongside overthrowing CM Naveen Patnaik's five-term government in the state. BJP had won just eight seats in 2019.

Smriti, 6 ministers lose in UP; victory margins fall for others

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Of the 12 Union ministers who contested from UP, only five, including PM Narendra Modi (Varanasi) and defence minister Rajnath Singh (Lucknow), managed to save their seats. Dubbed a "giant slayer" for defeating Rahul Gandhi in Amethi in 2019, Union minister Smriti Irani (women and child development) lost the seat to Gandhi family loyalist Kishori L Sharma by 1.6 lakh votes. Ajay Mishra Teni (MoS, home), whose



son allegedly mowed down four farmers in Lakhimpur during the farm laws protest, failed to win a third term, losing by 33,000 votes. Other portfolio-holders failing to retain their seats are MoS for MSME Bharu Singh Verma, who lost from Jalaun by 51,000 votes; Mahendra Nath Pandey (heavy industries) lost from Chandauli by 14,000; Sanjeev Balyan (MoS, agriculture) lost from Muzaffarnagar by 12,000 votes; Kaushal Kishore (urban development) lost from Mohanlalgarh by 84,000 votes and Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti (MoS, rural development)

lost Fatehpur by 35,000 votes. Ministers who won also saw their margins slide. Modi, who won by 4.8 lakh votes in 2019, defeated Congress state chief Ajay Rai by 1.5 lakh this year. Rajnath's margin reduced to 70,000 against 3.5 lakh in 2019. Pankaj Chaudhary (MoS, finance) retained Maharajganj with a margin of 35,000 against 3.4 lakh in 2019. Anupriya Patel (MoS, commerce and industry) of NDA ally Apna Dal (S) won with 46,000 votes against 2.3 lakh in 2019. The only mantri who bettered his 2019 margin was SP Singh Baghel (MoS, health), who won Agra with a gap of 2.2 lakh votes.

Lucknow: Since 2014, UP has stood out for BJP polls after polls. The politically crucial state stood out this time, too, but for INDIA bloc partners, Congress & Samajwadi Party. While BJP registered its biggest loss in UP since 2014, Congress, with six seats, could sense its much-awaited revival in the state. Its ally SP could end up as the biggest gainer both in terms of number of seats, winning 35, and the vote share of around 33% from 18.11% in 2019. The biggest loser this time was the Mayawati-led BSP, which drew a blank and reached its lowest ebb as its vote share dipped to 9.3%.

Rajiv Srivastava & Pankaj Shah | TNN

BJP's loss shows the loopholes it could not plug to retain the dominance it wielded since 2014. Analysts pointed out three factors that contributed to its poor performance in UP.

First, it could not counter the opposition's narrative that BJP govt was bound to change the Constitution and scrap reservation benefits to OBC and SC/ST if it was re-elected. Sources said this narrative kept whirling at the ground despite the party brass' concerted attempt to neutralise it.

"In their campaigns, PM Modi and Amit Shah kept assuaging the apprehensions stoked by opposition amongst the backward castes. Their efforts seem to have gone in vain," said a BJP functionary.



MISSED RED FLAGS?

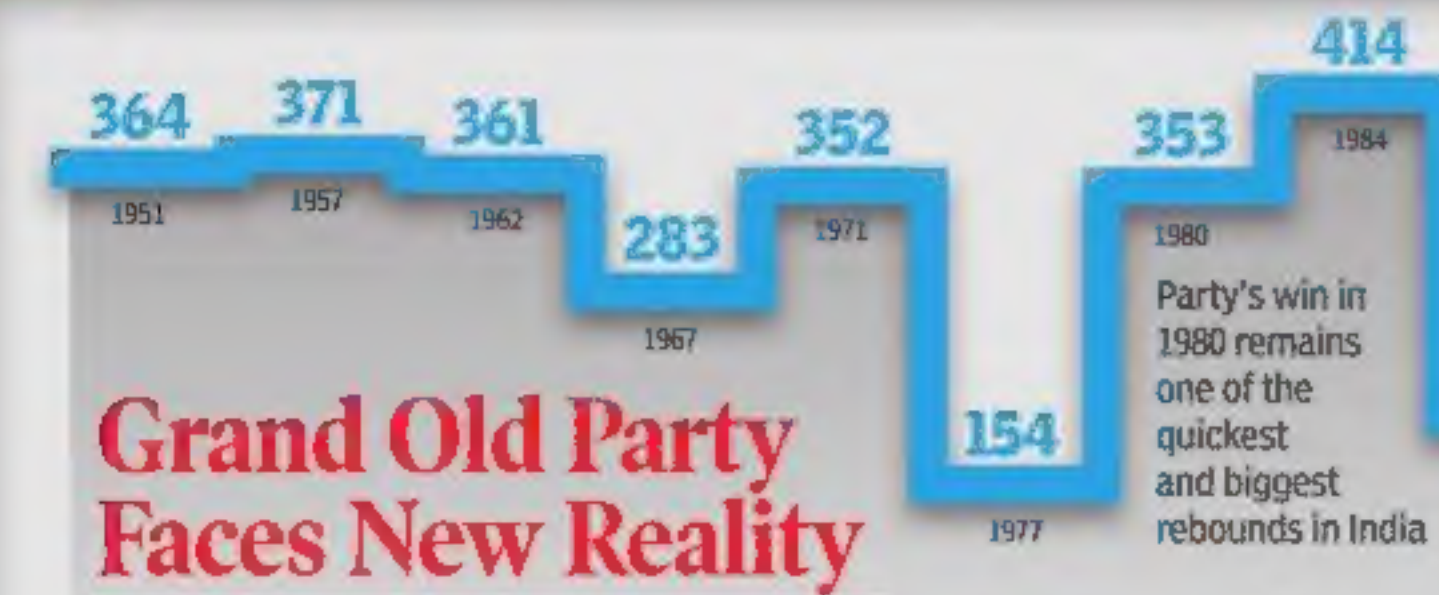
Second, despite negative feedback from party workers, BJP could not gauge the anti-incumbency against its MPs. It had initially decided to deny tickets to 30% of its incumbent MPs but ended up replacing

only 14 sitting MPs. Protests by farmers and other sections of society amplified the anger against the party in many pockets of the state.

The third factor contributing to BJP's loss was its failed

attempt to blunt the minority aggression and its consolidation behind the opposition, primarily the SP-Congress alliance, which successfully dented its tally. Analysts said BJP was unable to polarise Hindu voters, who got divided on caste lines, despite its high-pitched religious-cultural narrative centred around inauguration of Ram temple, renovation of Kashi Vishwanath Dham and aggressive persecution of the Krishna Jannabhooni-Shahi Eidgah case.

Caste-based parties, which joined hands with BJP to forge "an invincible caste alliance", did not tickle voters' minds, who, at places, were fed up with "OBC vs upper caste" narratives, primarily in eastern UP.

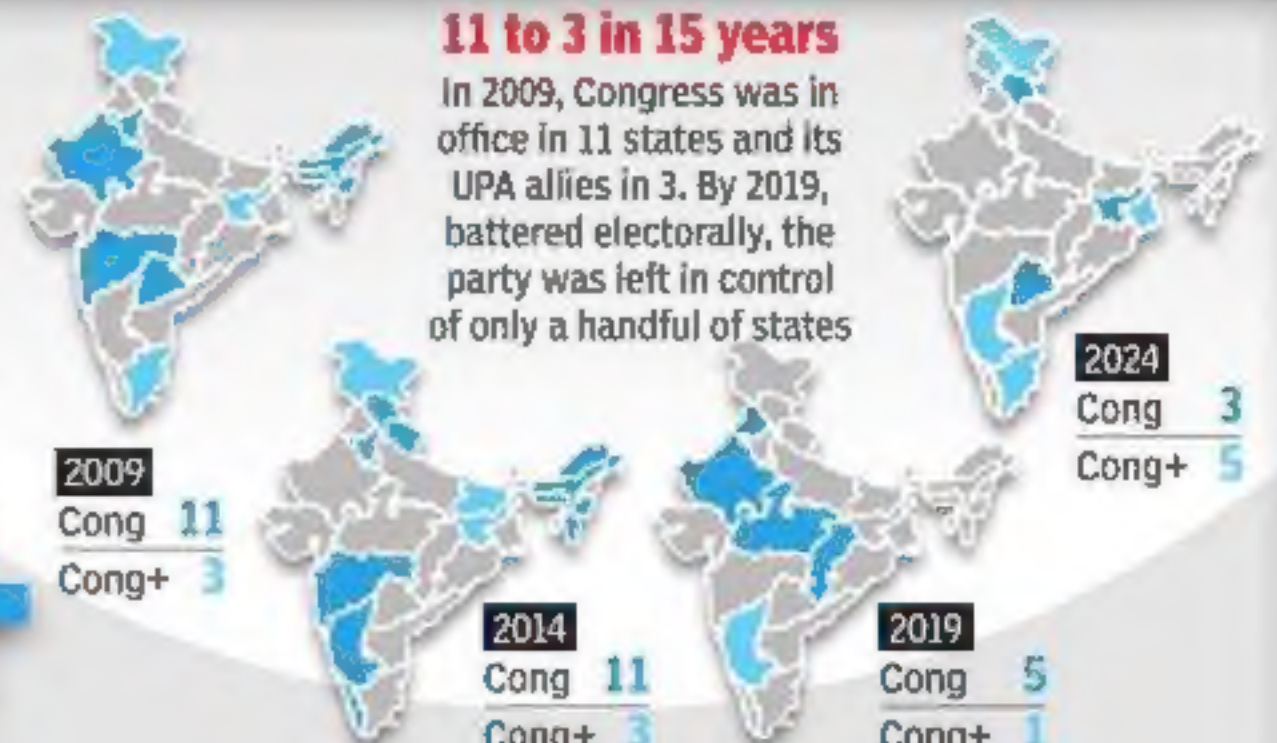


Grand Old Party Faces New Reality

After winning five straight terms, Congress was voted out of office by a united opposition in 1977. It had two more phases of decline with the longest one starting in 2014, though it would count 2024 as a turnaround in its fortunes

Despite 197 seats and a 40% vote share, Congress sat in the opposition in 1989. Aided by a sympathy vote following Rajiv Gandhi's assassination in 1991, it returned to office in 1991 in a minority govt and launched ambitious economic reforms

United Front and NDA coalitions kept Congress out of office for nearly a decade starting mid-90s. Then came UPA's 10-year stint that ended with BJP returning with a majority and reducing Congress to its lowest tally ever in 2014



11 to 3 in 15 years
In 2009, Congress was in office in 11 states and its UPA allies in 3. By 2019, battered electorally, the party was left in control of only a handful of states

Spunky RaGa Gives Cong A Comeback Tune

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When, contrary to many pundits' and its own expectations, Congress lost late-2023 assembly polls in the heartland, two things didn't happen. One, Rahul Gandhi didn't lose his temper. Two, he disagreed with party veterans like Ashok Gehlot who said BJP won by polarising voters. He had pointed out that in Rajasthan, for example, Congress vote share (40%) was just 2 percentage points behind BJP's (42%). That's not a sign of polarisation, Gandhi had said, that's a sign of poor communication.

Four months later, that cool-headed analysis seems to have paid off. Gandhi had told Congress seniors that an Ayodhya-focused BJP can be confronted, with a good agenda backed by better campaign. The 2024 general elections did see Congress run a far better campaign - fronted by a calm, collected Rahul Gandhi. The change seems to have happened as he walked those miles, crisscrossing India during his Bharat Jodo Yatra.

The 2024 Congress story is a story of Rahul Gandhi's evolution. The new Gandhi didn't let Congress's poor Lok Sabha numbers in 2014 and 2019 demoralise him. He didn't let December 2023's heartland losses break his heart. He didn't let an aggressive Narendra Modi intimidate him. His party was in blue funk in December 2023. Congress's 2024 strategy was predicated on wins in MP and Chhattisgarh and a close fight in Rajasthan. Anticipation of good results had even led to Congress deferring the orga-

nisation restructuring by a year, and the defeats saddled it with serious holes in management of states close to polls.

But Rahul rallied his troops, ordered fresh strategising, and worked on a manifesto that went into the heart of the Congress' UPA-era agenda of welfare-jobs-growth. If the manifesto struck a chord with voters, Congress owes much to Gandhi. He has been at the forefront of a "guarantees" based welfare policy and caste outreach, repeatedly arguing this was the only way to take on a no-holds-barred campaign of polarisation by BJP.

For Gandhi and the party, the stakes were clear. The Modi machine billed this general election as the ticket to Modi's place in history. There was huge asymmetry in resources between Congress and BJP, blanket media coverage of Modi, arrests of opposition leaders, and income-tax action on Congress bank accounts. Post Ayodhya consecration, it looked like a one-party election.

Then came the poll schedule. A two-month, seven phase election seemed to favour Modi, who could campaign across the country, backed by a party flush with funds.

For Congress, the much talked about existential crisis seemed finally here.

Except for Rahul Gandhi. He persevered, held strategy sessions, and sharpened his ideas. The key idea: maximise gains in south, pick up seats in the north, and try breaking new ground in states that had gone barren after the advent of Modi. Seats Congress has won in the North - UP, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab - are a testament to a resilience that none but Gandhi believed in. It was a methodical approach.



ach. Few in the party wanted an East-West Bharat Jodo Yatra after the December state defeats, but the Gandhi scion had a plan. Strategists picked 100-plus districts and seats where they thought Congress stood a decent chance in general elections. Gandhi covered 110 districts across 15 states in 62 days. The joint shows with INDIA allies became a forerunner for a campaign of unity.

The approach was pragmatic. At the high table of Congress planning, Kharge and Gandhi were unanimous that the party had to strike compromises and ensure that the anti-BJP alliance held firm. Congress contested 326 seats, the lowest in LS election history.

This was premised on one belief Rahul Gandhi had - that Modi had to be opposed and

that the opposition can't be a passive player or an occasional right-wing drummer out of fear of popular backlash, or stay on right side of what Congress sees as a vindictive prosecution machinery.

This was Gandhi's strategy from Day 1 of the first Modi sarkar: He took a 55-day sabbatical to force Congress to toe his line. That led to public agitations against amendments to the Land Acquisition Act. That also made him one of the key players in getting Lalu Prasad to accept his nemesis Nitish as the face of the "mahagabandhan" that humbled BJP in Bihar in late 2015. There were a string of disappointments, especially the Pulwama-influenced 2019 elections. But later, working as the backroom strategist after Kharge's

elevation as party chief, he unfurled the Yatras and the agenda of pro-poor outreach and "mohabbat ki dukaan". In these polls, Gandhi's sharply ideological line paid dividends. Broken up opposition parties like Uddhav Sena and Sharad Pawar NCP, parties targeted by probe agencies, RJD, AAP and JMM, agreed to take Gandhi's line - that standing for secularism, civil rights and the Constitution was the only counter in a Modi-dominated, Hindutva-laden political atmosphere. And INDIA's campaign had the unmistakable imprint of Rahul Gandhi.

Caste census emerged from this thinking as a stick to beat BJP with, and Opposition targeted votes of three pan-India groups - Dalits, Muslims and OBCs. Inside his own party,

WINNING LINES

Khata khat, khata khat, khata khat"

"Haath ne jhaadu pakad liya hai ('Hand' has picked up the 'broom')"

"It's a revolutionary manifesto"

"You must've seen that the PM has panicked, he is shaken, worried"

Addressed 107 rallies and conventions

Dress | Trademark casual trousers, white T-shirt and joggers

108 rallies, Gandhi turf wins: Priyanka emerges as a star

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra addressed 108 rallies across the country, managed elections on the Gandhi family turf of Rae Bareilly-Amethi, and struck a chord with voters that has reinforced her position as a star campaigner. The third Gandhi in politics has learnt fast and moved quickly. Though still to contest polls, the LS election is set to strengthen her position as a politician worthy of family name. Where she is seen to stand out is her ability to strike a personal touch with the audience. She, along with Sachin Pilot, Shashi Tharoor and Imran Pratapgarhi, was among key leaders in demand from states. Her equation with allies is another plus for Congress. TNN

From 'stop-gap chief' to Cong's Dalit face, Kharge gains heft

For the octogenarian Mallikarjun Kharge, who took over Congress presidency amid crisis and was widely viewed as a place-holder, the 2024 performance endows him with gravitas that removes doubts about his efficacy. The veteran addressed 100 rallies and brought credibility to Congress's social justice platform as a Dalit. His cool approach in defusing crises in state factions ensured a united campaign. Another plus was his clout in his home state, as the party swept Hyderabad-Karnataka region largely because of him. With his experience and stature, Kharge ensured easy coordination with allies. Kharge is the man to watch out for in coming months and years. TNN

Congress ticks right boxes, finds mojo for upcoming battles

TEAM TOI

For Congress foraging in the 60s in Lok Sabha over the last decade, the doubling of tally is a psychological victory. The decent score for the crisis-ridden party is seen as its revival, as it comes with appreciable performance in the north and the northeast.

The geographical advance was not anticipated in the election that came against the backdrop of the Ayodhya temple inauguration and the party's woes of resource crunch and defections. The turnaround points to what it has managed to get right - policy, communication and leadership. These are the three fronts on which Congress would feel confident going forward.

It has cemented the leadership of the triumvirate of Mallikarjun Kharge-Rahul Gandhi-Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. In 2024 polls, they addressed 315 rallies, communicating with voters and taking on BJP. Marginalised among the urban and upper caste demographics, Congress lurched towards a Mandalite reinvention, espousing causes like "caste census-50% ceiling removal", along with an aggressive welfare and secular outreach. Its declination in the Dec assembly polls had raised doubts about the policy makeover's efficacy. But LS results have restored its credibility, and Congress may have shed



TEAM TOI

its policy confusion for good.

Also, the effective campaign, physical and virtual, has resolved another handicap. The party has been in search of the strategy to counter Modi's hyper communication.

The decision of Sonia Gandhi, Kharge and Rahul to address the media early after the results showed the party is buoyed by its performance. The facts on the ground pointed to a crisis to be overcome, and not a war to be won.

Its biggest advantage has been the coming together of regional parties. With Maharashtra and Haryana polls four months away, Congress and allies would fancy their chances on the turf BJP had come to own over the last decade.

The party is still to find an anti-Dote to Modi's national appeal, but it is set to draw confidence from the LS outcome that it is making progress.

Together they rose: INDIA proves bigger than sum of its parts



TEAM TOI

When BJP derided the coming together of opposition parties under INDIA last July as the banding of the "corrupt" against Modi, little did it realise that the 16 disparate and volatile satraps could forge a seamless coordination that would give NDA a run for its money.

Mandate 2024, billed as Modi's ticket to history, ended up becoming a challenge that stopped BJP short of majority and NDA of a big majority.

The SP-Congress tie-up in UP delivered a jolt bordering on embarrassment, while the MVA gave BJP a major shock. The JMM-Congress-CPI(M)-RJD combo put up a good fight in Jharkhand despite its mascot, Hemant Soren, in prison. The same was true about NC-Congress in J&K-Ladakh. If the list is long, it only under-

scores the wide social net that INDIA weaved.

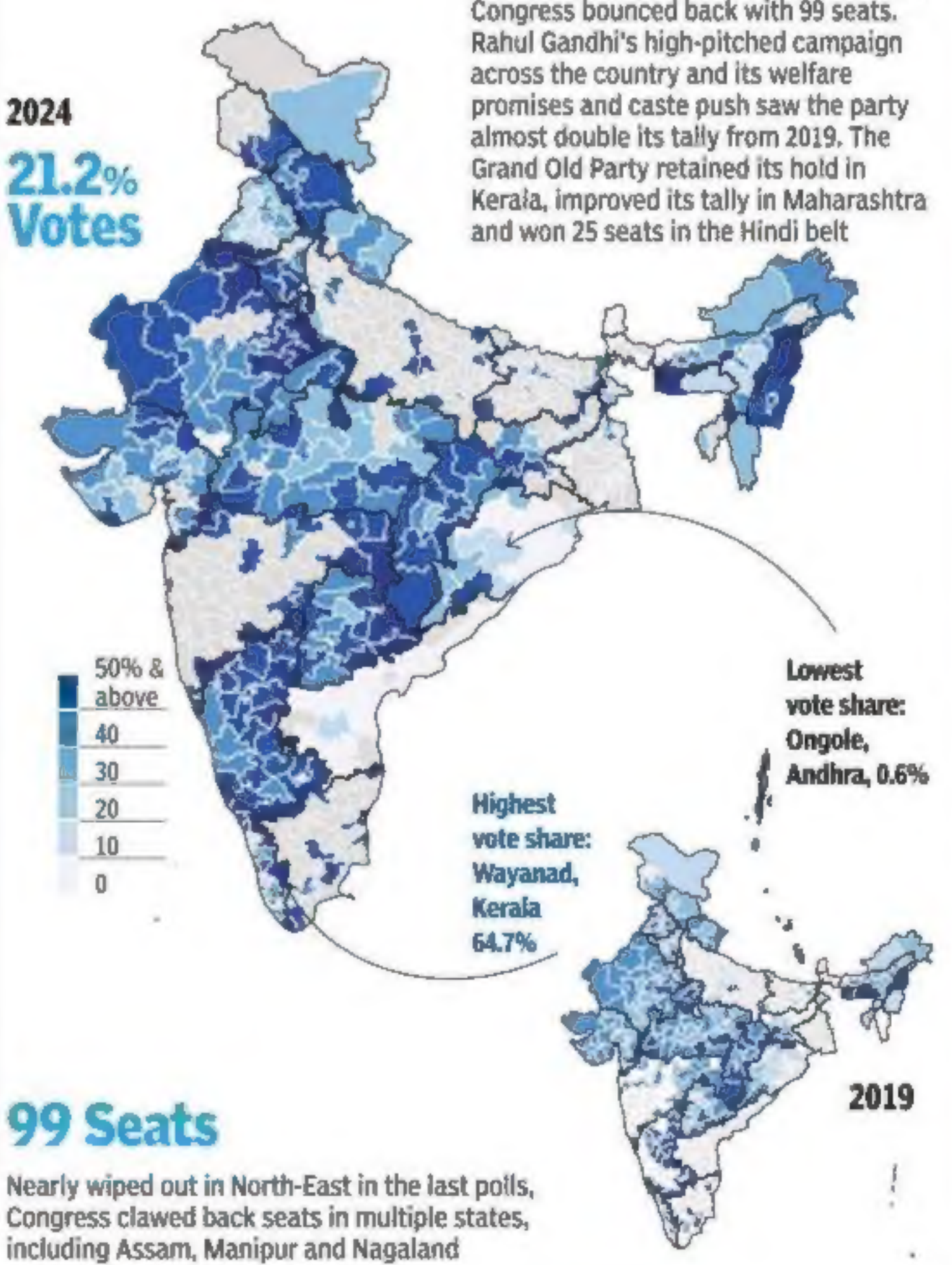
The pooling of bases with a joint campaign worked in ways best seen in contrast with 2022 UP assembly polls when Akhilesh had spurned Congress. SP fell way short as BJP romped home despite evidence of voter resentment. Forward to 2024, SP-Congress alliance fashioned a formidable social base. Rahul's presence as the ideological bulwark against Modi ensured consolidation of anti-BJP forces - backwards on social justice, Muslims on communalism and Dalits over "threat to Constitution". The overlap of disparate agendas, helped by Congress's own shift towards Mandalite politics, produced a social churn that BJP was not ready for.

Just how the word "gath-bandhan" spread across the heartland, ensuring vote transfer among allies, is nothing short of a miracle. The big glue was Congress's willingness to cede seats to allies that it would not have otherwise.

Even discordant notes helped. Congress and AAP refused to join hands in Punjab, realising that the top two players aligning would open space for BJP. In the end, BJP drew a cipher. Congress and Left stayed as traditional poles in Kerala, limiting a belligerent BJP. The only friction was in Bengal, where TMC refused to partner Congress despite entreaties. But the net big loser was BJP.

Congress Falls One Shy Of Century After Strong All-Round Show

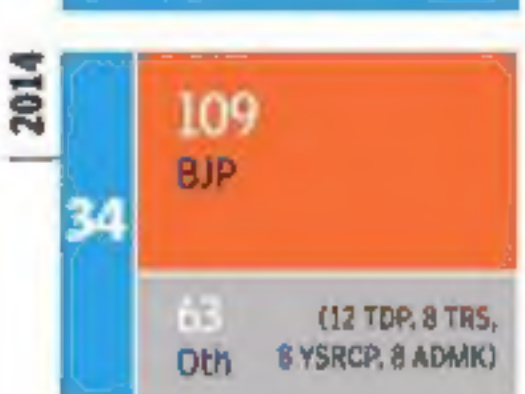
After the historic low of 44 seats in 2014, Congress bounced back with 99 seats. Rahul Gandhi's high-pitched campaign across the country and its welfare promises and caste push saw the party almost double its tally from 2019. The Grand Old Party retained its hold in Kerala, improved its tally in Maharashtra and won 25 seats in the Hindi belt



Nearly wiped out in North-East in the last polls, Congress clawed back seats in multiple states, including Assam, Manipur and Nagaland

WHAT HAPPENED TO CONG'S 2009 'PEAK'

The party last crossed 200 in 2009. Here's what happened to those seats since then.



In five years, it lost more than half of those seats to BJP



In 2019, BJP snatched 15 more, this time largely from others



Congress reclaimed nearly 30 more seats from its peak 2009 tally this time

YouTubers earn eyeballs, give oppn a leg up

TEAM TOI

New Delhi: In previous national elections, BJP larded over the social media space. In LS 2024, YouTubers played a significant role in snatching that space out of the saffron party's grip, thereby improving Congress-led INDIA's position. Anti-govt influencers earned eyeballs and shaped opinion, even attracting the attention of British weekly, The Economist. As per statista.com, India has 476m YouTube viewers.

Statistics shows Dhruv Rathee is the most viewed You-

tuber during this election. Rathee's Modi: The Real Story alone garnered 27m views. Media commentator Sevanti Niranjan describes him as "the big new phenomenon of these elections". Media commentator and columnist Madhavan Narayanan says that YouTubers like him are often playing the role of what mainstream media ought to do: check facts, question self-contradictions and supply meaningful context and background.

"People seem to like them for their passion, informality and storytelling styles. News-

related YouTubers are knowledge jockeys who have replaced staid or shrill TV anchors. I've no doubt this has reshaped opinion and media consumption among educated youths and middle classes," he says.

Media commentator Vanita Kohli-Khandekar says national TV gratifies this audience and wonders why no news channel caters to all Indians or to a large section. "There is an information gap. And nature abhors a vacuum. WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook, Reels and dozens of short video apps fill this gap. Some do a better job

than others and therefore get more eyeballs," she says.

Politicians have also sought out YouTube channels to connect with voters which enables them to sidestep the gatekeeping role of mainstream media, Niranjan says. "There is a power shift happening within the media universe from companies to individuals," she says.

The impact is noticeable. The govt aims to bring broadcast services, including OTT channels, within its ambit through the proposed Broadcast Services (Regulation) Bill, she says.

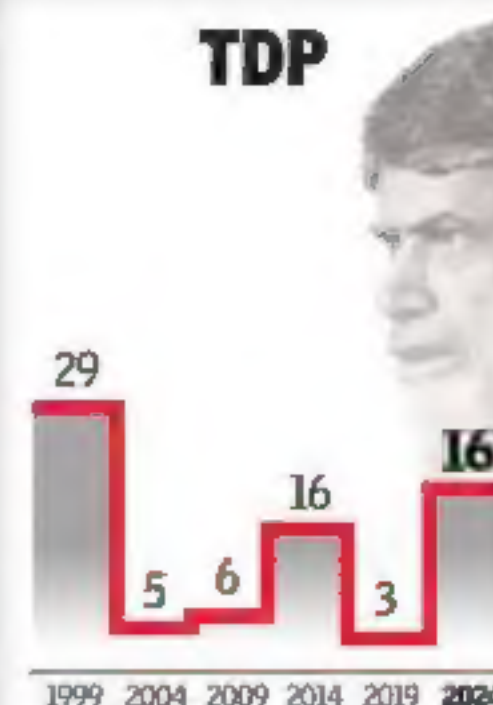
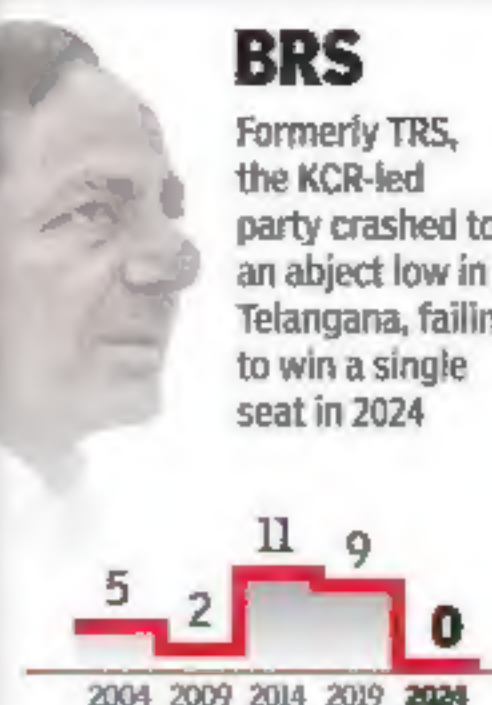
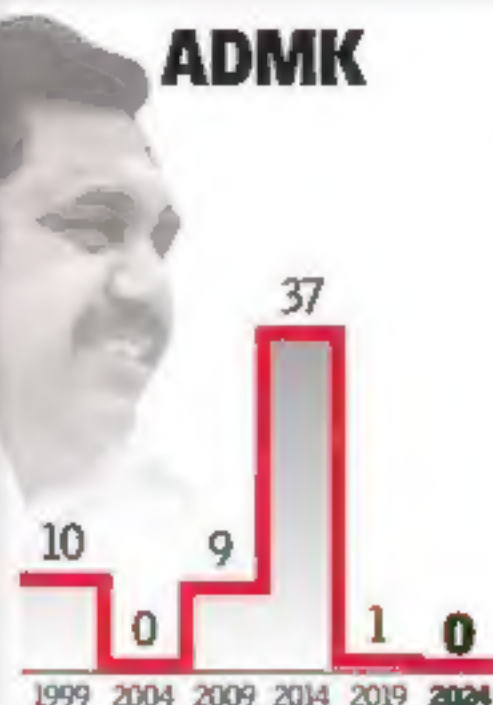
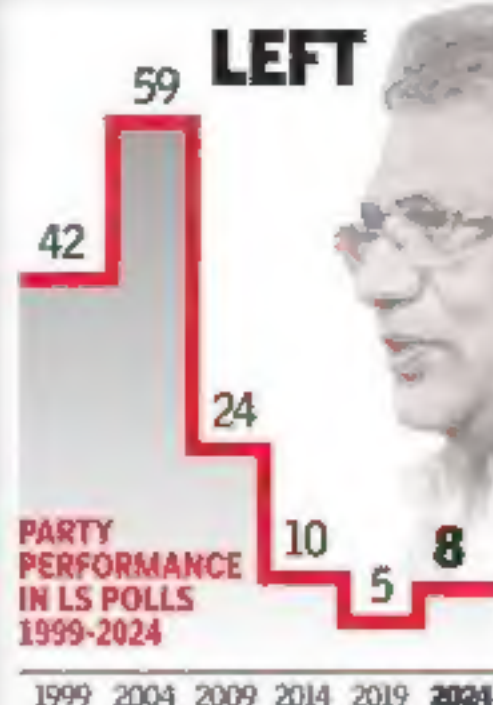
	2009	2014	2019	2024
Andhra Pradesh	21	0	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	21	2	1	6
Rajasthan	20	0	0	8
Maharashtra	17	2	1	13
Kerala	13	8	15	14
Madhya Pradesh	12	2	1	0
Telangana	12	2	3	8
Gujarat	11	0	0	1
Haryana	9	1	0	5
Punjab	8	3	8	7
Tamil Nadu	8	0	8	9
Assam	7	3	3	3
NCT of Delhi	7	0	0	0

	2009	2014	2019	2024
Karnataka	6	9	1	9
Odisha	6	0	1	1
West Bengal	6	4	2	1
Uttarakhand	5	0	0	0
Bihar	2	2	1	3
Jammu & Kashmir	2	0	0	0
Chattisgarh	1	1	2	1
Goa	1	0	1	1
Himachal Pradesh	1	0	0	0
Jharkhand	1	0	1	2
Other Northeast	6	5	0	3
Other UTs	4	0	2	2

Note: Peak tally doesn't include Assam and J&K | Source: EC

Beyond Big Two, Power Players

Twelve major players outside of BJP and Congress, particularly those in south India, together won 138 of the 543 seats in 2019 LS polls. Most of these parties threw in their lot with either NDA or the INDIA bloc this time. Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSRCP, Naveen Patnaik's BJD and Mayawati's BSP were notable exceptions



Based on leads/results till 11.30 pm

Akhilesh Takes A Step 'Backward' To Move Forward And Beyond MY

Pervez Siddiqui@timesgroup.com

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav had got off to a good start. His early emphasis on 'Pichde (backward), Dalit, Alpasankhyak (minorities)' was combined with a sharp focus on farmer issues, joblessness, paper leaks and rising prices. It turned out to be one of his best election strategies, backed by intelligent candidate selection.

The Samajwadi Party has impressively led the INDIA bloc charge in UP winning 37 of the 80 seats it contested, its best showing in the state in a general election. The PDA formulation, in particular, became a unifying force. The highlight of this new-found "social engineering" was that the party managed to win over Dalits in general and Jatavs in particular who were, till now, seen as traditional BSP voters.

This election has also shattered the hypothesis that Dalits and Yadavs can never unite in UP. As per caste assessments based on exit polls, 65% of Scheduled Caste votes polled went to the SP — an increase of 21% as compared to 2019 polls. Of these, 32% of Jatav votes polled went to SP though they have traditionally been committed voters of BSP. The shift was not only from the BSP to SP.

SP strategists insist that the jump in Dalit voters was more than what was visible in 2019 Lok Sabha polls. "In 2019, SP had contested elections in alliance with the BSP. So it was no surprise that Dalits voted for our party. This time we contested against BSP and got an overwhelming response from the Dalit community,"



EXPANSION MODE: Akhilesh's new-found 'social engineering' managed to win over Dalits in general and Jatavs in particular who were, till now, seen as traditional BSP voters

said a senior SP functionary.

Apart from the PDA pitch, Akhilesh succeeded in turning 'Abki baar 400 paar' into a 'Save the Constitution' narrative. He was among the first to say that the BJP wanted 400-plus seats to change the Constitution and end reservation for Dalits and backward classes. This worked to bind together jobless youths and families from Dalit and backward segments.

Wooing Dalits & non-Yadav OBCs

After the 2019 LS alliance between SP and BSP, when Mayawati had walked away with 10 seats and Akhilesh was left with 5, it was evident that vote transfer between SP and its ally was a one-way street. The SP leadership felt cheated. Party strate-

gists then shifted their focus to Dalit leaders with whom the party was already in touch.

Former BSP minister Ghura Ram, a founding member, was the first big dalit leader to switch loyalties to SP. Soon after, more joined Akhilesh. The SP did not only pick senior leaders. Regional coordinators, former ministers and other office-bearers of BSP joined the exodus. Akhilesh made it a point to ensure that in press meets he was accompanied by Dalit leaders.

He decided to rope in non-Yadav OBCs as well. By Oct 2021, prominent backward BSP leaders like sitting MLAs Lalji Verma and Ramachal Rajbhar were with SP. The focus on non-Yadav OBCs was aptly reflected

in the appointment of his party's national executive in 2023. Of 62 members in the committee, around 40% were 'non-Yadav' OBCs and hailed from electorally influential communities like Kurmi, Rajbhar and Nishads. The list also included six members who were Dalits.

The blowback

As expected, the focus on Dalits and Non-Yadav OBCs left upper caste, Yadav and Muslim functionaries uncomfortable. Those eyeing tickets for 2024 Lok Sabha polls and those offered better deals by BJP were the first ones to snap. But that did not deter Akhilesh from giving tickets as per his PDA formula to all castes and communities.

At least 14 candidates were ex-BSP. In fact, Akhilesh shed the image of the SP being an M-Y party by giving the least number of tickets to Muslims and Yadavs in the party's history. "Of course, it was all done after taking community leaders into confidence, explaining to them how a large number of Muslim and Yadav candidates help BJP's bid for counter-polarisation," said an analyst.

For SP strategists, the final highlight was a bunch of victories from unlikely quarters like Faizabad, which it had last won in 1998. "The victory of Awadesh Prasad and the tough fight that Sunita Verma put up against BJP is important as it exposes BJP's attempt to use religion for political gains," said a senior SP functionary. Two other important victories for SP came from Rampur and Moradabad — seats which have the maximum Muslim population.

Allies May Change, But Nitish Remains Axis Of Bihar Politics

Madan Kumar & Manoj Chaurasia | TNN

Patna: Politics is a game of possibilities, and no one knows this better than Bihar CM Nitish Kumar who has ditched enough allies over the years. His spectacular performance in the Lok Sabha polls has once again ensured he remains the alliance's face in Bihar till next year's assembly polls. More so, because former deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi's untimely death has left BJP without a stalwart in the state.

BJP can, of course, campaign using PM Modi's name, as it did in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, but given Nitish's considerable support base among the Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) and women — JD(U) has won 12 of the 16 seats it was allotted under the seat-sharing arrangement — it would not want to distance him.

The EBC category comprising 130 small caste groups like Dhanuks, Kumhars, Kahars, Noniyas, Kewats, Nais, Mallahs, Telis and Tatmas, makes up 36% of Bihar's electorate, as per the recent caste survey. Along with this group, Nitish was backed by support from his Kurmi-Koeri (Kushwaha) community. Kurmis are 2.9% of Bihar's electorate and Koeris 4.2%. The CM also benefitted from the Mahadalit category comprising 21 castes that he helped create. Mahadalits account for some



SABKE SAATH: Nitish's flip-flops had no impact on voters

10% of the state's total vote.

Women form another pillar of support: Nitish reserved 50% of slots in panchayati raj institutions, urban local bodies and teaching jobs for them. He gave 35% reservation to women in all govt jobs and 33% quota to girl students in medical, engineering and sports institutions. And the blanket ban on liquor in Bihar reduced domestic violence. It's not surprising that he's popular among the state's 3.6 crore women voters.

Also, vote transfer between BJP and JD(U) has never been an issue. NDA comprising BJP, JD(U), LJP (Ram Vilas), Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular), Rashtriya Lok Morcha appeared to be winning as many as 32 seats in the state and one of the main reasons is smooth transfer of votes among allies.

Nitish, who has been Bihar CM for more than 17 years and

a Union minister for more than six years, is known to nurse ambitions of holding a top national-level post: PM, prez or vice-prez. Last time he was in NDA (July 2017 to August 2022), he had wanted to succeed M Venkaiah Naidu as VP. The late Sushil Modi had revealed this and insiders say BJP's denial of Nitish's demand had precipitated his turn towards Mahagathbandhan. Again, in Mahagathbandhan, Nitish tried to bring the opposition together to oust PM Modi in 2024, hoping he would be appointed INDIA bloc's convenor, and PM if the bloc succeeded. But when Congress disappointed him, he rushed into NDA's embrace.

Given these facts, Nitish remains the "axis" of state politics. Strangely, his flip-flops has had no impact on voters this time. JD(U) has got 18.50% votes in Bihar, only 2% less than BJP's 20.53%.

Maya caught in her own jaal as Jatav voters shift loyalty

Neha Shukla@timesgroup.com

Lucknow: A disastrous performance by Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is a sign that the party has lost its core Jatav voters, the subcaste its chief Mayawati belongs to.

Her strategy to have a post-poll role in search of a "satta ki master chaabi (master key to power)" has been hit as much as her own image of being an influential Dalit leader — Jatavs, who form 55% of the Dalit population and 11% of the total population, had rallied behind her till now. Chandrashekhar Azad, the man who has presented himself before Dalits as a viable alternative, has won from Nagina on the banner of his Azad Samaj Party.

Being out of office for long in UP is one reason to drive core voters away, apart from BJP making inroads with its welfare schemes. BSP is now back to its position in 2014 when it had zilch. It has not only failed to open its account, but its vote share has dipped from over 19% in 2019 to around 8%. It had won 10 seats in 2019 LS polls when it contested in alliance with Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Lok Dal.

This time, the campaign was marked by missteps. Firstly, the decision to contest



2014 REDUX: BSP failed to score any Lok Sabha seat wins

alone was perceived as a 'suicidal move'. There were voices of dissent even from within. Prominent Muslim leaders like Imran Masood and Amroha MP Danish Ali were expelled after they reached out to Rahul Gandhi. Masood won from Saharanpur on a Congress ticket. Knowing that BSP would not make it alone, MPs Sangeeta Azad, Ritesh Pandey and Malook Nagar also quit.

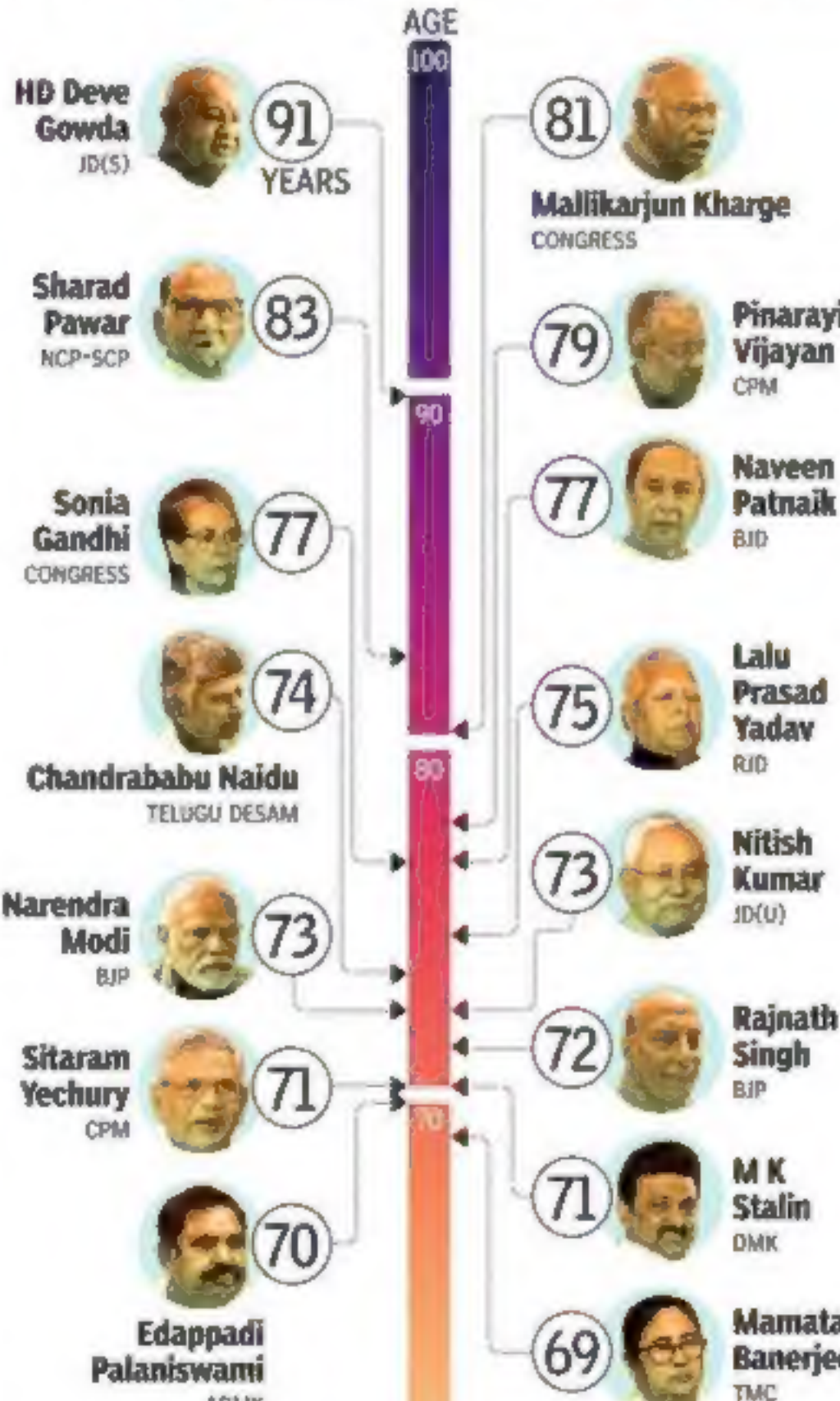
Mayawati stuck to her party's foundational ideology to distribute tickets based on 'Jiski Jitni Hissedari, Uski Utni Bhagidari'. She fielded 20 Muslims, 18 Dalits, 16 OBCs and 15 Brahmins, but this included several BJP turncoats. They supplanted candidates who were the party's first choice. In all, BSP re-

placed its candidates in 14 seats. But it was the replacement of Shrikala Singh, wife of gangster-politician Dhananjay Singh in Jaunpur, and ex-BJP district president Dayashanker Mishra in Basti which led to the perception that BSP was acting under pressure. "Mishra has been active in Basti for more than three decades. He could have done substantial damage to BJP," said sources.

The last bit of controversy was around her nephew Akash Anand, who was midway through the campaign divested of the national coordinator's post and succeeded by Mayawati herself. This led to speculation that BSP's leadership took the step to shield him, having realised it was not winning even a single seat.

Venerable Veterans Far From Done

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal referred to BJP's 'retire-at-75' policy for netas to wonder if PM Modi would also follow suit. Seasoned campaigners are a presence to reckon with across the political spectrum. Here's a look at the prominent names



Tejashwi leads charge on road to 2025 assembly polls

Jainarain Pandey @timesgroup.com

Patna: There was much at stake for the family of RJD chief Lalu Prasad in the Lok Sabha elections. His two daughters — Misa Bharti and Rohini Acharya — were contesting from Patliputra and Saran respectively, while younger son and political heir Tejashwi Prasad Yadav was leading the combined Opposition for the first time in a general election.

After drawing a blank in the 2019 LS polls, RJD has managed to claw back lost ground by winning 4 of the 26 seats it fought, including Patliputra where Misa contested. Tejashwi has now set the tone for the assembly elections due next year: the verdict makes it clear that he will be the opposition's face for Bihar CM against Nitish Kumar or a BJP candidate. In all, the RJD member and his allies (Congress and CPI-ML) have won 9 of the total 40 seats.

Tejashwi has already had his share of ups and downs. After the 2015 state polls which RJD contested with JD(U), he became deputy CM. By sticking to an agenda of jobs, employment, education, and health, the 34-year-old Tejashwi generated a following among the youth. He largely succeed-



KEEPS LANTERN BURNING: Nitish's about-turns have given Tejashwi an opportunity to emerge from the shadow of his father Lalu Prasad

ed in conveying the message that it was he who facilitated "5 lakh jobs in 17 months" as deputy CM of Bihar.

Tejashwi did not resort to personal attacks on Nitish when he lost his job after the JD(U) veteran parted ways with RJD in Jan this year. Instead, by refusing to needle Nitish, Tejashwi kept observers guessing. He provoked speculation about Nitish's plans when he said that "chacha" would take a big decision after the June 4 poll results. It forced Nitish to make it clear in his public meetings that he would never part ways with BJP.

Nitish's about-turns have given Tejashwi an opportunity

to emerge from the shadow of his father and RJD chief Lalu Prasad. He has established himself not only as the face of his party but also of the opposition bloc. The elections have also proved Tejashwi's willingness to experiment by fielding candidates of castes other than those that traditionally dominate in a particular seat. He picked a Dalit candidate in a constituency meant for the general category. And he fielded Kushwaha candidates — who belong to Nitish's caste — to dent the NDA vote bank. His ability to look beyond Lalu's M-Y (Muslim-Yadav) formula is expected to yield rich dividends in the long run.

KCR, man seeking national flight, crashlands where it all began

Mahesh Koride @timesgroup.com

Hyderabad: Telangana celebrated 10 years of its formation on June 2 this year, but K Chandrashekhar Rao (KCR) and his Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), which led the movement to carve out India's youngest state, are back where they were over 20 years ago.

The party, in its original avatar as TRS, was formed in 2001 and contested its first Lok Sabha election in 2004 winning five seats as part of the UPA alliance. It won two in 2009 in alliance with TDP. In 2014, Telangana was formed and KCR became the undisputed leader of the state. Not winning a single seat this time leaves KCR with no role at the



BRS, formerly TRS, fought its first LS election in 2004, winning 5 seats

Centre. "Knowing that the LS polls were crucial for his party's survival, he had embarked on a bus yatra despite undergoing hip replacement. He addressed meetings on is-

sues like irrigation water from Kaleshwaram project and the Krishna River water issue. The party held protests and demanded that Congress govt implement promises

made during the assembly polls. But going by the results, people want to give more time to Congress," an analyst said.

BRS had won 11 LS seats in 2014 without allies, securing 34% of votes. In 2019, its vote share rose to 41% though it won fewer seats (9). This was months after sweeping assembly polls with 88 of the state's 117 seats. KCR seemed invincible at that point. In retrospect, it was the stage from where his popularity graph began dipping. He has been unable to arrest the slide since. His "inaccessibility" and unresolved local issues like state public service commission question paper leaks, joblessness among urban youth, allegations of corruption have dented his image.

Out of Kejriwal shadow, lone ranger Mann brings AAP consolation prize

Vibhor Mohan@timesgroup.com

Chandigarh: The turmoil in Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) ahead of the Lok Sabha election turned the contest into a high-stakes personal battle for Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann — he was leading a campaign in the absence of Arvind Kejriwal and Raghav Chadha with his own govt's two-year performance as a key issue.

AAP's victory in three of the 13 seats in Punjab — Sangrur, Anandpur Sahib and Hoshiarpur — provides the party consolation in the light of the washout in Delhi and is a morale-booster to Mann. AAP has reclaimed Sangrur, represented twice by the chief minister himself in the past. Overall performance must be gauged vis-à-vis numbers notched up by rival parties as well as AAP's tally in Delhi. Mann would want to assess the performance of four cabinet colleagues who lost and why the party



LAST MAN STANDING

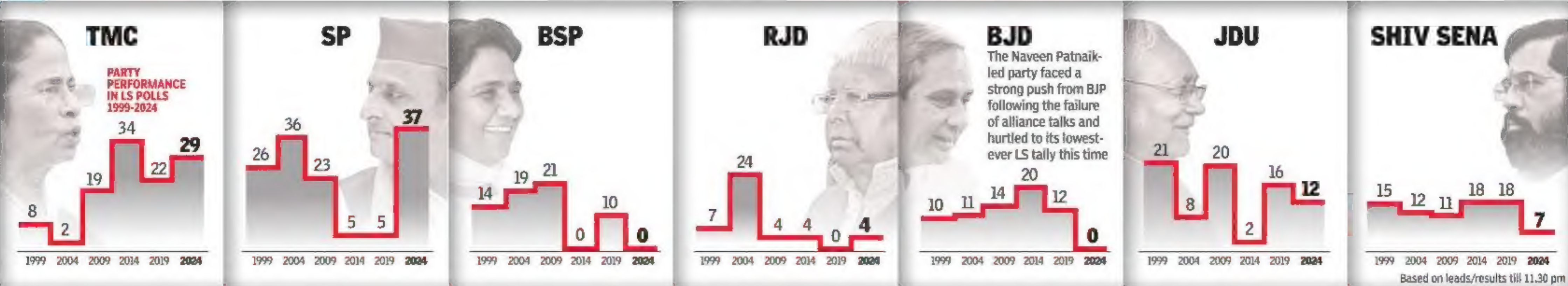
ty's 92 MLAs in the 117-member state legislature failed to get more leads for AAP in their assembly segments.

Stepping out of Kejriwal's shadow and with a free hand to shape strategy, he was more than a star campaigner. Uncertainty over Kejriwal and Chadha's invol-

vement in Punjab affairs and multi-cornered contests against Congress, SAD and BJP made his role crucial. Unlike the Punjab Congress unit, where no single leader hogged the limelight, AAP's campaign revolved around the CM.

Though results fall far short of any intended target, the score would give AAP visibility in Parliament and national presence amid the troubles that beset its leadership in Delhi. Kejriwal had put Mann in the spotlight with the slogan 'Sansad mein bhi Bhagwant Mann...' (Mann in Parliament too), seeking votes to "strengthen" the chief minister's position to take on the Centre and the governor.

Satish Singh, a political analyst and former I-PAC member, said, "Mann was the commander-in-chief of AAP's campaign in Punjab. Had he faltered, there could have been murmurs of dissent. It was Mann's show and he had to ensure a decent performance."



Didi's Gambit To Ditch INDIA In WB, 'Go Ekla' Splits Votes In Her Favour

Saibal.Sen@timesgroup.com

■ Dec 1984: A young green-horn Congress worker from Kalighat — wearing a sari and hawai chappals — has just done the unbelievable, defeating CPM veteran Somnath Chatterjee from Jadavpur, the reddest of red citadels. Mamata Banerjee herself seems surprised and pundits attribute her victory to the sympathy wave that Congress benefited from after Indira Gandhi's assassination

■ May 2024: Mamata Banerjee is canvassing for votes at Jadavpur's Baro Bhooter Math (translated as the "ground belonging to a dozen ghosts"). She can work up the crowd to her will and asks for this seat once more so that she can help INDIA bloc in Lok Sabha, never mind that the alliance is not on in Bengal

In a political career of five decades, Banerjee has proved her critics wrong multiple times. After a bruising



TMC's tally gives Mamata Banerjee more elbow room in INDIA bloc

months-long campaign, with her party winning 29 seats in Bengal — its second-best Lok Sabha performance after 2014 when it won 34 — she has had the last laugh again. The tally has gone up substantially from 22 in 2019. Leading the party with 108 public rallies and multiple road shows, one of which saw her walk 12km at a stretch on her south Kolkata home turf, Banerjee, 69, criss-crossed

This journey, where PM Modi's campaign has tried to shift the burden of anti-incumbency to the state govt, was to reach the hearts of Bengal's women (through schemes like Lakshmi Bhandar) and its minorities (with about a quarter of the state's votes), even trying to establish Trinamool as a nativist party of the Bengali-Hindu majority through references to Durga Puja (now a UNESCO-recognised "intangible cultural heritage") and the legacy of Swami Vivekananda.

Questioned for her decision to go solo, which had the potential to split traditional minority votes, Banerjee has been proven right — the community stood rock solid behind her. By splitting the Bengal battle into a three-way contest, Trinamool's gains outweigh its losses. In the close contests which went its way, Congress-Left vote shares were higher than Trinamool's victory margins, indicating a split in anti-Trinamool votes.

Difference in vote share in 2024 between Trinamool and BJP has widened to 10%.

With a final tally of 29 seats — third highest among opposition parties in India (after Congress and SP) — it gains more elbow room in INDIA bloc. That Left-Congress barely scraped through with one seat in Bengal also vindicates a pre-poll offer by Banerjee for 2-3 seats. The results may settle the unease in the Congress-Trinamool relationship. Banerjee has already said she disapproves of the way CPM "monitors" Congress in INDIA bloc.

Finally, the Trinamool win sets up a lot of expectations. Most importantly, Banerjee has promised to ease the central fund flow into MGNREGA in Bengal. Her social schemes have been a defining factor. A weakened BJP at the Centre, and a stronger INDIA bloc, allows her to go beyond the anti-Centre pitch and get work done.

BJP Goes All Out In TN But No Cracks In Stalin's Citadel

TEAM TOI

Leading INDIA bloc's campaign in Tamil Nadu, DMK president and chief minister M K Stalin played two roles: one, as the last sentinel against a saffron surge in the South; two, as a victim of the Centre's partisanship in funding states. He has emerged victorious, his alliance winning all the 40 seats in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Keeping his coalition flock — Congress, CPM, CPI, VCK and IUML — together, Stalin has retained national prominence. The DMK president may not have prime ministerial ambitions but his stature as an entrenched regional sardar gives him a centrality like his father M Karunanidhi enjoyed for decades. The Lok Sabha victory may even be seen as vindication after bruising corruption charges against at least two of his ministers.

A post-Covid outreach in healthcare and education along with proactive administrative measures by his govt has held anti-incumbency in check. Going forward, a friendly relationship with the Centre would help Stalin, especially since his state faces financial challenges. But the DMK president cannot copy up to Modi when the next assembly election in Tamil Nadu is less than two years away. After all, it was his strident anti-BJP stand



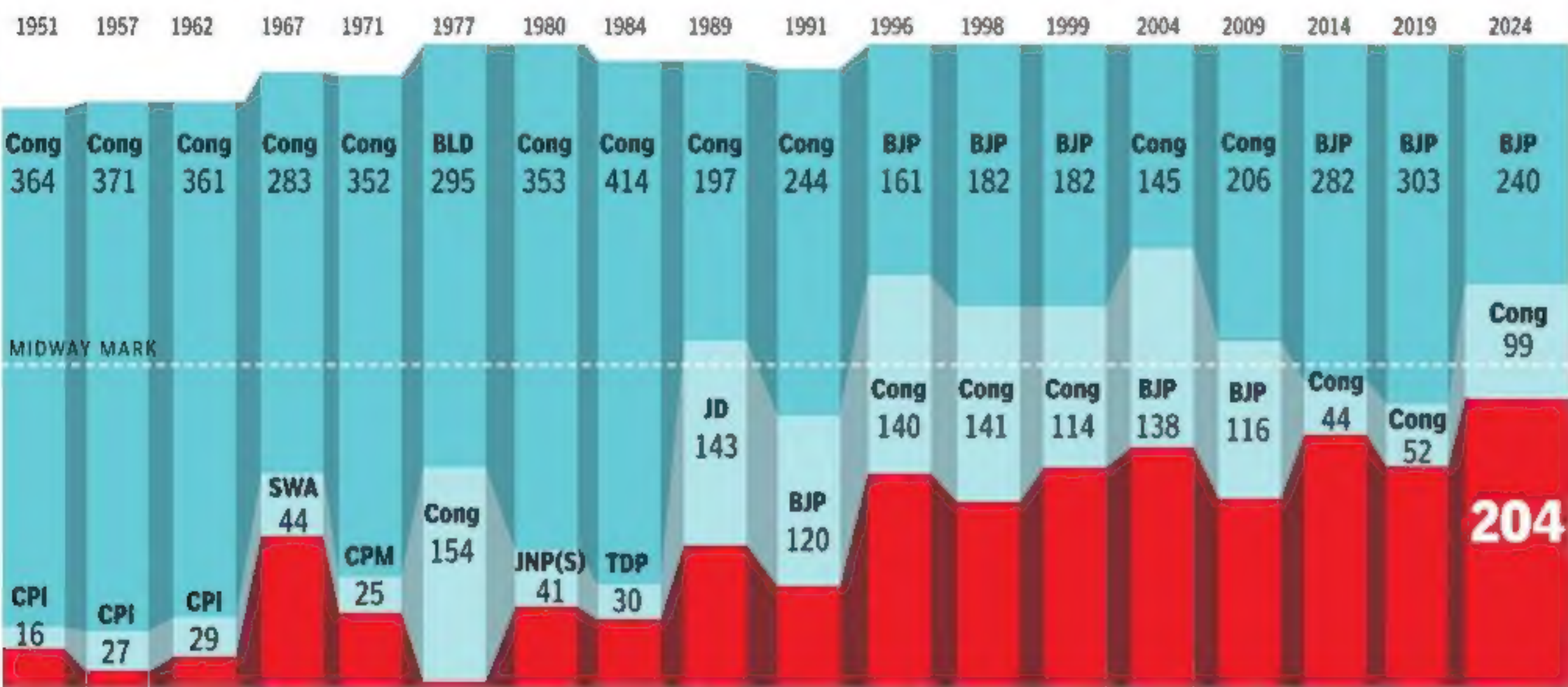
SAFETY BELT ON: If DMK rivals join hands, 2026 could be harder than 2021

that gave him a decisive lead in a triangular contest. Even after AIADMK, which he had dubbed 'BJP's B team', quit NDA in Sept 2023, DMK kept criticising it for a "secret pact" with BJP. Stalin's message was clear: I am the supreme Dravidian commander against Hindutva. That was his USP. DMK benefited from a divided opposition. If its rivals (PMK included) choose to join hands, 2026 could be harder than 2021, when DMK won 133 of 234 assembly seats. The TN chief minister has his work cut out, especially with BJP gaining in vote share. BJP state president K Annamalai was able to set a narrative that the battle — in terms of optics and decibel levels — was between DMK and BJP. The Sta-

lin-Annamalai war of words was so shrill that AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami's criticism of Stalin — and at times BJP — was barely audible. While he is DMK's undisputed leader at 71, Stalin will have to pass on the mantle sooner than later. The expected elevation of his son Udhayanidhi as deputy CM may give more ammo to Stalin's detractors, but as long as DMK functionaries accept the rising son's ascent without a murmur, dynasty politics may not harm the party's electoral prospects. BJP, rising slowly as it is, may not be an immediate threat, but actor Vijay's electoral entry as a disruptor in 2026 can trigger unexpected churns.

Regional Stars' Rising Graph

Congress and BJP have shared the mantle of the largest party in Lok Sabha since the first elections in 1951-52 with the only exception coming in 1977, when opposition parties had fought under the Bharatiya Lok Dal banner. The more visible change can be seen in the space that regional parties had wrested in Parliament, consistently proving to be the second largest bloc in the last few decades. It's a rise amply aided by the rut that Congress's found itself in amid BJP's onslaught



In 1967, strong showing by right-wing outfits — like Swatantra Party and Jana Sangh — put the spotlight on smaller players for the first time

A sweeping anti-Congress coalition in 1977 brought together several smaller regional outfits that managed to control Lok Sabha for a brief period

Led by SP, regional parties that were part of INDIA bloc cornered a fair chunk of seats. But the likes of BSP, BJD and YSRCP, which did not join any alliance, failed roundly as the 2024 results put the spotlight on the growing bipolarity of Indian politics

Results and leads as of 00.30pm

'Bhatakti Aatma' stages a comeback, shows his nephew who's the real NCP

Anurag.Bende@timesgroup.com

Pune: Sharad Pawar's challenges will have to wait. The 83-year-old, who was ridiculed as a 'bhatakti aatma' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the campaign, has just licked them again in the toughest match of his career. Going into the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, Pawar was fighting with one hand tied. His nephew Ajit had engineered a split in NCP and walked away with the party's name, symbol and leading lights. With Ajit joining the BJP-led Mahayuti grouping, each seat had become a contest between Pawar's candidates and Prime Minister Modi.

Despite the headwinds, Pawar's NCP (SP) is set to win 8 of the 10 Lok Sabha seats it contested as part of the MVA alliance with Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT). This will be Pawar's best strike rate in an LS poll. His NCP's wins span the Mumbai region (Bhiwandi), western and central Maharashtra (Baramati, Madha and Shirur), Vidarbha (Wardha) and north Maharashtra (Dindori and Ahmednagar). Pawar has managed to make inroads in regions where NCP's support base was considered relatively weaker. In comparison, the rival NCP led by Ajit Pawar has won a lone seat in Raigad.



PAWAR SHIFT: This will be his best strike rate in an LS poll

As a key member of INDIA bloc, the former Union minister and four-time chief minister was fighting the election simultaneously on different fronts, including in his backyard Baramati, where Ajit had challenged his supremacy by fielding his wife Sunetra against Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule. Many felt that the ageing Pawar would largely confine himself to Baramati and western Maharashtra to counter Ajit's immediate challenge, but he surprised them with a busy tour. He attended over 50 rallies in over 40-degrees heat and pegged away at rebuilding the organisation that Ajit had split. With veterans like Chhagan Bhujbal and Dilip Walse Patil choosing to go with his nephew, Pawar didn't have easy picks either for the 10 seats his party contested. But he made up by poaching candidates from the rival NCP and BJP.

than a tough challenge. What worked most for him was the sympathy generated by the split. Both Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray — MVA allies who were 'dispossessed' of party names and symbols — rode a wave this time even as their campaign focused on issues such as the rural economy and the jobs crisis, which resonated with voters.

Following NCP's split, some seniors like Jayant Patil and Vandana Chavan in the organisation had stayed put with Pawar while most of the younger lot had gone with Ajit. For organizational heft, Pawar delegated charge to younger leaders, including grandnephew Rohit, who campaigned among first-time voters. Another grandnephew, Yugendra, held fort for Supriya in Baramati. These tactics paid off. Though a challenge came from within the family, Sharad Pawar managed to unite the rest of his clan behind him.

The 2024 Lok Sabha election was in some ways a repeat of the 2019 assembly polls when many leaders left NCP and the Opposition declared the Sharad Pawar era as over. But Pawar's party won more than 50 seats. He also managed to split the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance to forge the MVA with Congress and Sena, which led the govt until 2022.

Uncertain road ahead for Ajit's NCP after lone LS poll victory

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Pune: This was the first electoral test for the two NCPs. But even with Supreme Court upholding the Election Commission's recognition of his group as the real NCP, Ajit Pawar has been unable to make it count in Lok Sabha polls.

His no-holds-barred campaign against cousin Supriya Sule has failed. His wife Sunetra Pawar lost to Sule by roughly 37,000 votes. In fact, the other LS seat where the two NCPs were pitted against each other (Shirur) was also won by the Sharad Pawar-led party. With just one LS seat (Raigad) in his kitty, many of Ajit Pawar's MLAs might read the verdict as a sign of things to come.

Ajit Pawar may fare better in assembly polls, but some say NCP's dismal performance in LS polls will reduce his bargaining power when he negotiates with BJP's Devendra Fadnis and Shiv Sena's Eknath Shinde for seat-sharing. On the personal front, the LS polls have isolated Ajit in the Pawar clan. During the campaign, most family members, including his brother Shrinivas, sided with Sharad Pawar.

Uddhav proves he's more than just his father's son

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Mumbai: With his Shiv Sena (UBT) winning 9 of the 21 Maharashtra Lok Sabha seats it contested as part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance, the results are a mixed bag for Uddhav Thackeray, who has lost the official party name and symbol to the rival Eknath Shinde-led formation.

Thackeray had built a narrative of betrayal around the 'mashaal' or flaming torch (his symbol), ever since Shinde mobilised a majority of Sena MPs and MLAs to ally with BJP two years ago. Sena (UBT) has won two seats more than the Shinde-led party and seven of 13 in which it was pitted against the latter. In Mumbai, where the party was founded, Sena (UBT) won three of the four seats it contested. But it has lost in Konkan, which was another of its strongholds.

"I had expected we would win more seats. We have certain suspicions...in Mumbai North West, we will challenge the election of Ravindra Wankar. We have lost the seat in Konkan, this is a surprise but we will see why this happened," Uddhav said.

The results mean redemption for Thackeray, who recast a party founded on headline Hindutva ideals to make common cause with Congress and NCP. Shinde's charge that the



WAY FORWARD: Sena (UBT) won 7 of 13 direct fights with Shinde Sena

Thackerays reneged on party founder Balasaheb's core values haven't stuck. The outcome is also significant because Sena (UBT) held on despite snapping ties with BJP, which was seen as the dominant partner in Lok Sabha campaigns. Thackeray is now in a position to be the opposition's CM face for the Maharashtra assembly polls in Oct. "Sena's core Marathi voters have stayed with Thackeray and he has managed to add Muslim and Dalit voters. This makes him the most acceptable face for assembly polls," said an observer. The LS results also show vote transfer can take place among MVA allies. With the state showing

strong anti-incumbency amid a farm crisis and anxiety about jobs and price rise, Thackeray will be in mission mode for the assembly polls. Sena (UBT) functionaries also expect many workers and mid-level office bearers from the Shinde group to return. While Thackeray has said that his doors are shut for defector MLAs and MPs, he may take back mid-level functionaries and grassroots workers. "Uddhav may go on an overdrive to woo former corporators and shakha-level workers even if MLAs and MPs aren't taken back," said an observer. Come Oct, Sena (UBT) would also eye a big chunk of assembly seats within MVA.

Rebel Shinde holds ground despite 'sympathy wave'

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Mumbai: Maharashtra's ambitious and street-smart CM Eknath Shinde had shown time and again that he could not be written off. After being suppressed and passed over by Uddhav Thackeray, Shinde struck back by splitting Shiv Sena and taking it over. On allying with BJP to form the govt, he managed to wrest the top post, leaving a stunned Devendra Fadnis to settle as his deputy. His direct proximity to the BJP brass in Delhi led to a sweet deal for the LS polls: 15 seats compared with four for BJP's other ally, NCP.

The verdict will bring vindication and relief. Having won 7 seats, Shinde's party has

a better strike rate than BJP in Maharashtra (which won 10 of the 28 seats it contested). The verdict may well mean he continues to hold his bargaining position and can lead the Mahayuti alliance ahead of state assembly polls due in Oct.

While the result has not shown that he is a claimant to the reins of the "real Shiv Sena", it may not exactly cause an exodus from Shinde's party towards the resurgent Shiv Sena (UBT) ahead of assembly polls. In the 13 direct contests with Sena (UBT), Shinde's party fared better in at least five — Buldhana, Hatkanangale, Kalyan, Maval, and Mumbai North

West. Thackeray's bruising campaign, pitching "loyalists" against "traitors", did not entirely work.

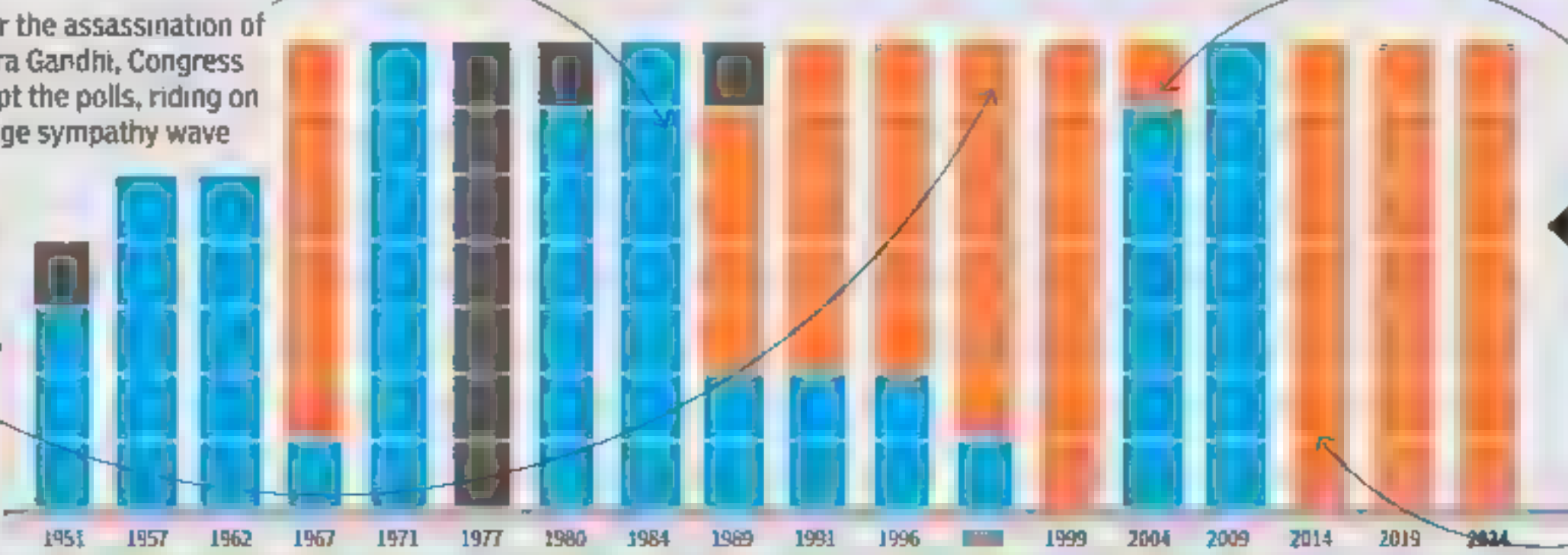
In Kalyan, his son Shrikant Shinde won by over 2 lakh votes, while in Thane his nominee Naresh Mhaske was leading by over 2 lakh votes. "Shrikant Shinde won with a record margin. People have voted for the development work done by PM Modi in 10 years and our Maha yuti govt. Many seats were lost by a very thin margin and may be because the candidates were declared late. We will rethink these issues and rectify our mistakes," Shinde said. For Shinde, having outperformed Ajit Pawar's NCP, he has now shown his party is BJP's more valuable ally.

Again, Delhi Goes To Biggest Party

Since 1998, the capital has unfailingly reflected the mood of the country. From farmers on the Yamuna floodplain and traders in Chandni Chowk to the movers and shakers of Lutyens' Delhi, its electorate defies classification. The trend suggests that whoever does well in Delhi goes on to form govt at the Centre

After coalition govt's failed at the Centre, the electorate gave BJP a chance in 1998, but the Vajpayee govt lasted all of 13 months. In 1999, Delhi backed BJP all the way

After the assassination of Indira Gandhi, Congress swept the polls, riding on a huge sympathy wave



The BJP-led NDA govt's campaign in 2004 was based on its 'India Shining' slogan, but failed to resonate with the electorate. The lone BJP winner in a flood of Congress blue was Vijay Kumar Malhotra, who had defeated Manmohan Singh in 1999 in the same constituency

7-0
2024

BJP was again the largest party in Lok Sabha though it fell short of majority on its own. Repeating its preference of 2014 and 2019, Delhi again stayed solidly behind the party

After two terms of UPA, Delhi voted for change and, sure enough, its overwhelming backing for BJP dovetailed with the party forming govt at the Centre in 2014. The capital stayed with the party in 2019 and Modi remained PM for a second straight term

Bansuri gets poll tune right

One of the most fascinating faceoffs in the capital saw AAP's three-time MLA Somnath Bharti rock horns with BJP's debutante Bansuri Swaraj, daughter of former Union minister, the late Sushma Swaraj. In a constituency that has returned political stalwarts like Ata, Bihari Vajpayee and LK Advani, Swaraj secured a win with a margin of 78,370 votes. During the initial rounds, the two candidates were engaged in a close battle, with Bansuri maintaining a lead of around 3,000 votes. The margin continued to widen with time. Interestingly, this was one of the few seats where a three-way contest was anticipated with BSP steering clear of INDIA bloc. BSP's candidate Raa, Kumar Anand, who dramatically resigned in April from AAP and as minister, could muster just 5,629 votes. Close to 5,000 NOTA votes were recorded. The constituency once again threw up a woman

NEW DELHI

ELECTORS : TURNOUT

15.31L 55.4%

53.5% 44.2%

2.3% Others

Party Votes

BJP Bansuri Swaraj 4,53,185

AAP (INDIA) Somnath Bharti 3,74,815

Others 19,468

victor, with Swaraj succeeding outgoing BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi. Swaraj, a lawyer by profession, entered active politics as co-convenor of Delhi BJP's legal cell last year and quickly rose to the position of secretary in the state unit.

Bidhuri has rival on the mat

In an intense contest between two Gujjar MLAs, BJP's Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, the incumbent MLA from Badarpur and leader of opposition, secured a resounding victory with 6,92,832 votes. AAP's Sahi Ram, a two-term MLA from Tughlaqabad, managed 5,68,499 votes. South Delhi parliamentary constituency, contrary to common belief, consists of not only affluent areas but also urban villages, unauthorised settlements, slums, luxurious farmhouses, resettlement colonies and a rural region close to Haryana border. Both contenders hail from rural parts of the constituency, which encompasses 10 assembly constituencies. Sahi Ram held a lead of over 1,200 votes during the early trends. However, after 9am, Bidhuri overtook him, establishing a margin of 1,299 votes. As time passed, the gap widened significantly. By 11.30am, Bidhuri had surged ahead by more than 21,220 votes. Around 1pm, with the lead exceeding 66,000 votes,

SOUTH DELHI

ELECTORS : TURNOUT

22.9L 56.5%

53.5% 43.9%

2.6% Others

Party Votes

BJP RS Bidhuri 6,92,832

AAP (INDIA) Sahi Ram 5,68,499

Others 34,667

the result was a foregone conclusion. While Sahi Ram felt that BJP gained from a strongly performance in Palam, Bijwasan and Chhatrapur assembly constituencies, supporters of saffron parties conceded that AAP may have done well in Sangam Vihar and Tughlaqabad.

Upstart upstages old hand

In his first Lok Sabha battle, Praveen Khandelwal emerged victorious for BJP, vanquishing his veteran Congress rival Jai Prakash Agarwal. A close contest had been expected but Khandelwal eventually secured the seat with a margin of 89,325 votes, despite a 2-lakh-strong Muslim electorate largely supporting the Congress after its alliance with AAP. The ding-dong battle saw Khandelwal leading by just a single vote in the second round. Congress, in the first three rounds, secured 26,965, 53,284 and 75,958 votes against 24,260, 49,476, and 74,915 for BJP. The tide turned in the fourth round when Khandelwal, surged ahead, garnering 1,02,430 votes against 93,523 for Agarwal. After 15 rounds of counting around 2.30pm, Khandelwal had managed an efficient lead. The BJP candidate expressed satisfaction at the results. "Being a trader, my priority is to work for improvement of

CHANDNI CHOWK

ELECTORS : TURNOUT

16.5L 58.6%

53.5% 44.2%

2.3% Others

Party Votes

BJP Praveen Khandelwal 5,16,496

Cong (INDIA) JP Agarwal 4,27,171

Others 22,435

markets, promotion of startups and striving to simplify GST," Khandelwal said. Agarwal, a 10-time parliamentary polls combatant, accepted the people's verdict and thanked his supporters.

BJP goes north in North West

Among the victorious BJP candidates in Delhi, Yogender Chandoliya, contesting the North West Delhi seat, had the highest winning margin. As a first-time Lok Sabha contestant, Chandoliya's impressive performance underscored his party's hold on the constituency, which also has a BJP MLA representing Rohini. Chandoliya's dominance was evident from the early rounds of counting. By round 3, he had total of 11,778 votes, while Udit Raj of Congress, an earlier MP from the same seat, had received 5,332 votes. By noon, Chandoliya's kitty had 1,99,743 votes and his rival's, 81,831. Eventually, the gap became a yawning 2.9 lakh that couldn't be closed.

NORTH WEST DELHI

ELECTORS : TURNOUT

25.7L 57.9%

58.3% 38.7%

3% Others

Party Votes

BJP Yogender Chandoliya 8,66,483

Cong (INDIA) Udit Raj 5,75,634

Others 45,090

connectivity, poor water quality and lack of sports facilities. Along with them, we will also take up the construction of an underpass in Kirari and rejuvenation of waterbodies."

"We will fulfil the promises we made during campaigning," said Chandoliya. "I thank the people for giving BJP such a huge vote share. There are problems in the areas here like lack of

AAPeal diminished, Kejriwal's troubles mount

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New Delhi: It is indeed ironic that when the INDIA bloc has given a tough fight to NDA, Arvind Kejriwal — with govt in two states — and his party have suffered a huge setback. In fact, the poll outcome shows a loss of credibility for brand Kejriwal. The AAP campaign pitch virtually called for a referendum on the Delhi chief minister's arrest in the liquor policy case, portraying it as vendetta politics by BJP. This very neatly dovetailed with its criticism of LG VK Saxena for being the Centre's malicious agent.

What did AAP gain after 21 days of campaigning by its chief, who was out on interim bail? It had an alliance with Congress in Delhi and they drew a blank on all 7 seats. The Punjab story is even more dire. It has won only 3 out of 13 seats in the state where it is the ruling party. And it has failed to win any seat in Gujarat, Assam and Haryana.

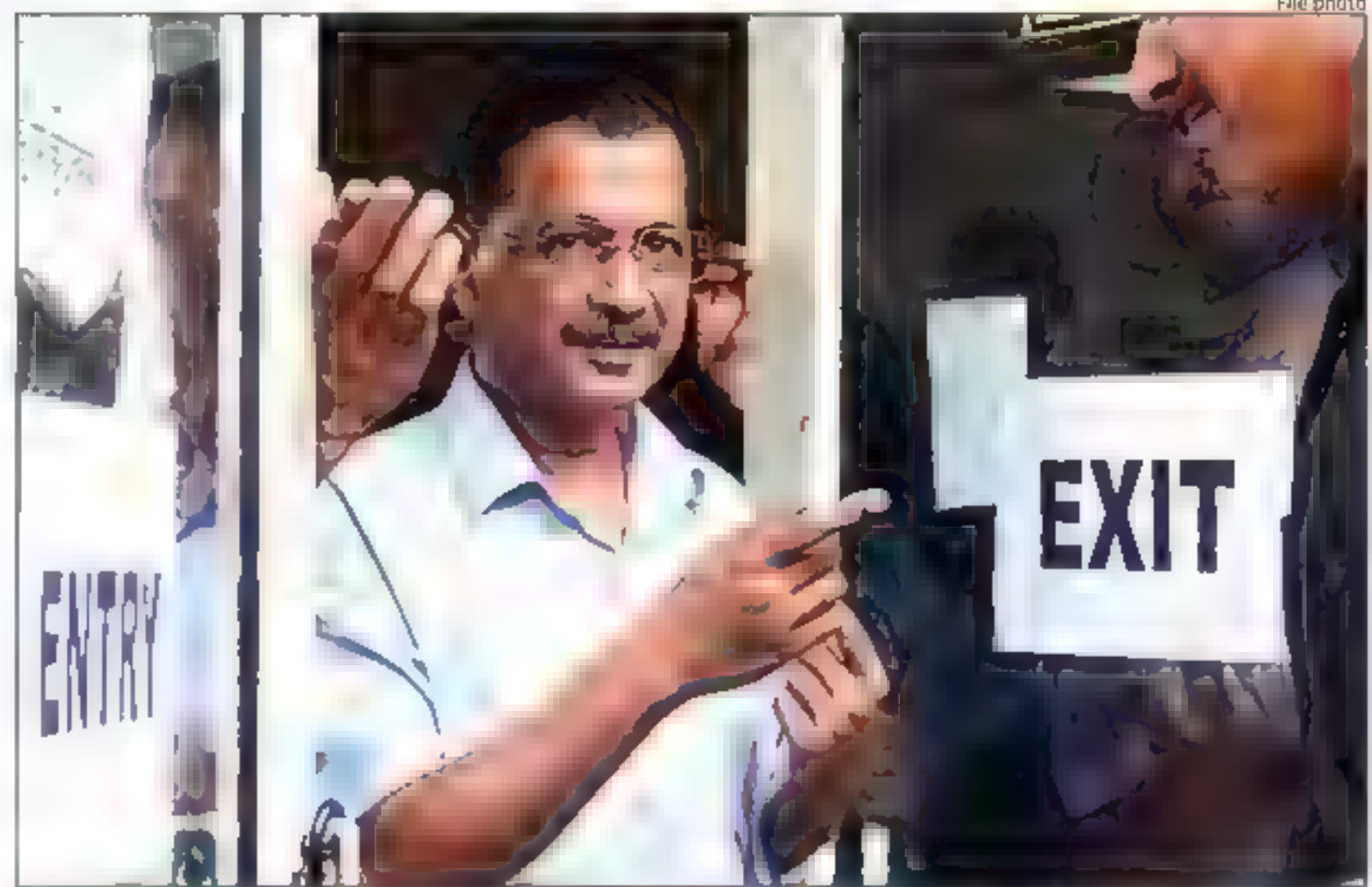
This puts a question mark on AAP's relevance as a player

of significance in the INDIA alliance. The party's bargaining power in INDIA alliance will be considerably weakened with more powerful regional satraps calling the shots.

It can, however, take solace from the fact that with NDA's tally reduced, and BJP doing introspection, its mascot can expect some respite from central agencies. However, if Kejriwal insists on continuing as CM while in jail, he has to contend with the possibility of Central rule being imposed and assembly polls being called for earlier than Feb next year when the AAP govt completes five years.

The slogan of "jail ka jawab vote se" didn't yield a mandate for the party. The poll results also show that Kejriwal's 'Delhi model of development' and its projection in Punjab, where it had swept the assembly polls in 2022, did not impress the electorate enough to choose AAP over BJP and Congress.

AAP had joined politics promising an "alternative" to traditional parties like BJP and Congress, calling them



TASK CUT OUT: For chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, the biggest challenge now is to keep AAP relevant

corrupt. When it struck an alliance with Congress, it did not sit well with voters who saw it as an opportunistic move. The argument that AAP had joined INDIA in order to defeat a dictatorial dispensa

tion at the Centre seems to have been lost on the electorate. The party, which had secured an impressive victory in Punjab assembly polls in 2022, getting catapulted into the limelight as a party that

could be a national player of significance, failed to perform in the state winning just 3 seats — Sangrur, Anandpur Sahib and Hoshiarpur. Congress got 7 out of 13. Significantly, both AAP and Cong

ress had agreed not to fight in an alliance in the face of resistance from state units who felt going separately would work better. That clearly worked for Congress, leaving AAP high and dry.

As part of the INDIA alliance, AAP and Congress were also in the poll fray jointly in Gujarat. AAP contested in two constituencies — Bharuch and Bhavnagar — with the former being the home turf of later Congress stalwart Ahmed Patel. Congress has won one out of the 24 seats it contested. BJP bagged 25 out of 26 AAP drew a blank.

Besides, AAP also lost Kurukshetra to BJP while Congress, which fought on 9 seats in Haryana, won 5. Kejriwal's party was also defeated in two constituencies in Assam.

With Kejriwal seen as the face of AAP in Delhi and beyond, with no other person to take over reins of the party and govt in sight yet, the way forward for his party will be determined by how long he remains in jail and how far he is able to run the show from inside while keeping his flock together.

Ctrl+Alt+Delhi: Alliance Finds Zero Bandwidth

BJP Continues Dominance, But Margins Of Win Come Down

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New Delhi: The capital once again proved to be impregnable for the opposition with BJP scoring a hat trick by comfortably winning in all seven parliamentary constituencies despite a joint challenge by Aam Aadmi Party and Congress. The saffron party's winning margins might have got reduced but it established its might quite comprehensively.

The party secured 54.4% of the total votes polled, down by 2.3% from its 2019 vote share while AAP and Congress together polled 43.1%. AAP got 24.2% of votes in the four constituencies where it fielded its candidates while Congress polled 18.9% in the three constituencies where it faced BJP.

AAP and Congress had managed to stitch a pre-poll alliance in Delhi to prevent division of anti-BJP votes but the challenge fizzled out.

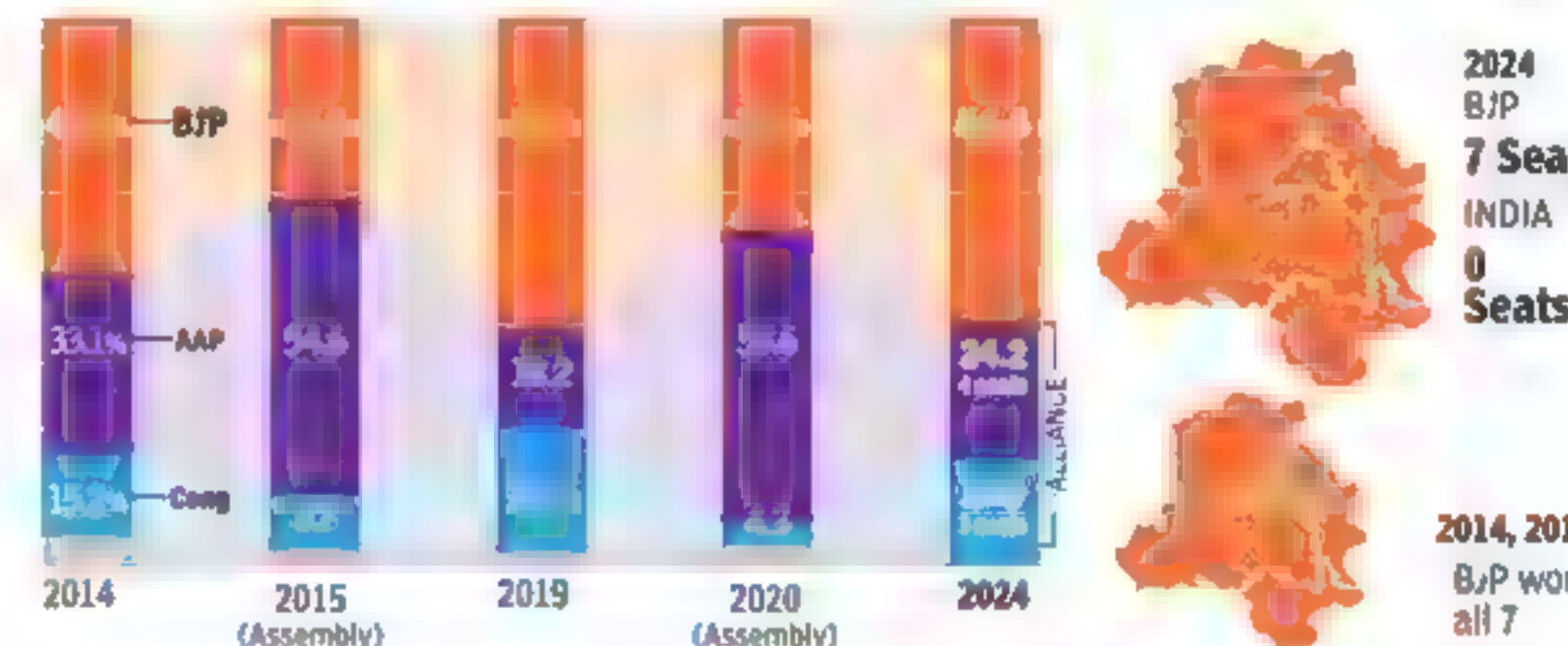
BJP had wiped out the anti-incumbency factor by replacing six of its seven sitting MPs with new candidates and it seemed to have worked. Its decision to retain Manoj Tiwari in North East Delhi paid off. He won his third consecutive election by defeating Congress' Kanhaiya Kumar, former student union president of JNU by over 1.4 lakh votes.

Making her electoral debut, BJP stalwart Sushma Swaraj's daughter, Bansuri, defeated AAP's three-time MLA Somnath Bharti in New Delhi by a margin of about 78,370 votes.

The party's biggest victory, however, came from North West Delhi, the constituency reserved for scheduled caste

Alternating Currents In Delhi Polling Booths

The birth of AAP and rise of Modi's BJP has seen voters in Delhi swing between either camp, favouring the Kejriwal-led party in the assembly and going with the saffron party in Parliament



candidates, where former North Delhi Municipal Corporation (pre-merger) mayor Yogendra Chandoliya defeated Congress' Udit Raj by over 2.9 lakh votes. The 2019 election had also seen BJP scoring its biggest victory from the same constituency.

In West Delhi, BJP's Kamaljeet Sehrawat defeated her nearest rival, AAP's Mahabul Mishra, by a margin of 2 lakh votes. A former Congress MP, Mishra had lost the last two Lok Sabha elections from West Delhi before joining AAP in 2022.

BJP leader of the opposition in Delhi assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, defeated AAP's Sahi Ram in South Delhi by over 1.2 lakh votes. In East Delhi, BJP's Harsh Deep Malhotra defeated AAP's Kuldeep Kumar by a margin of over 93,663 votes.

The only constituency where the INDIA bloc gave

BJP a few anxious moments initially was Chandni Chowk where Congress' Jai Prakash Agarwal, a veteran of several elections, was pitted against BJP's Praveen Khandelwal. Agarwal maintained a narrow lead in the first few rounds but lost to Khandelwal by over 89,325 votes.

AAP and Congress had sought votes to "save Constitution and democracy" and raised unemployment and inflation as major poll issues. AAP had even turned the election into a referendum on the arrest of party chief and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal.

"Unlike states like UP and Bihar where youths were unhappy about not getting good jobs, it was not an issue in Delhi," explained Ravi Ranjan, a professor of political science in Delhi University. "Being a metropolitan city, the issues for the citizens of Delhi are different and the results reflect that."

Both Congress and AAP candidates relied heavily on Kejriwal, who held a few roadshows but seemed to have failed to galvanise voters.

Why assembly polls may still be anybody's game

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New Delhi: The Delhi assembly elections, about eight months from now, will show if the Lok Sabha results have any bearing on the outcome.

Despite defeats in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls, AAP managed to secure an overwhelming majority in the last two assembly elections. In 2015, the party bagged 67 of the 70 seats. In the 2020 elections, it emerged victorious in 62 constituencies.

Although BJP has claimed all seven parliamentary seats, the outlook for it in the assembly elections will depend on various factors.

Political analyst Chandrachud Singh says, "Lok Sabha and assembly elections are like pots on two different planks" and Delhi has previously witnessed voters making different choices. However, Singh pointed out that BJP's current Lok Sabha victory has boosted the morale of its Delhi cadre. "If the party works diligently on core issues concerning the people of Delhi, their prospect of getting seats in the assembly elections will definitely increase," he said.

Saroj Giri, an associate professor in Delhi University, offered a contrasting perspective. He said that despite the BJP's clean sweep of Delhi's Lok Sabha seats, its voting percentage has declined. He also highlighted that BJP's overall performance across the country was not entirely satisfactory.

Giri emphasised that the AAP govt has successfully delivered on its promises,

such as free water, electricity, bus service and better education for women. "Poor, lower-middle and upper-middle class people can make a sharp distinction in their choices when it comes to assembly polls," he said.

This can be proved by the fact that in the 2019 Lok Sabha poll, BJP was ahead in 65 assembly segments but when the assembly elections took place in 2020, AAP won 62 seats.

"The common man fumes due to mass corruption in DDA, DJB and even MCD (where BJP couldn't do anything in 15 years)... It is high time the party brass consolidates their efforts to understand voters' needs," said Atul Goyal, president of United Residents' Welfare Association.

The sustainability of AAP as a party over the next few months will also play a crucial role. Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal is in jail and LG VK Saxena is determined to prevent govt from functioning from prison. It remains to be seen if central rule will be imposed.

Some experts believe that the imprisonment of AAP ministers might translate into sympathy votes. Mrdula Mukherjee, a former JNU professor, said Dehutes are astute. The mandate given by the people to parties in the Lok Sabha elections is a testament to this fact.

She said AAP was being treated unfairly. "People are watching. Whenever an election happens, it will reflect in the results," she added.

AAP and BJP will also have to contend with a resurgent Congress which may go all-out to claw back lost ground despite the very short time available.

No wild swings in West

BJP's Kamaljeet Sehrawat is poised to become a first-time MP after securing a resounding victory over AAP's Mahabul Mishra. Sehrawat, who contested the Lok Sabha election for the first time, garnered 8,42,658 votes, while Mishra, a former MP and three-time MLA from Congress, managed 6,43,645. BSP's Vishakhah was third with 7,824 votes. Sehrawat, who previously served as mayor of the erstwhile south corporation in 2017, currently represents one of the wards in Dwarka after her victory in the 2022 municipal election. While it was a close battle in Madipur and Tilak Nagar, Sehrawat's vote share remained high in Janakpuri, Vikasपुरi, Uttam Nagar, Hari Nagar, Rajouri Garden, Dwarka, Malala and Najafgarh, helping her maintain a healthy lead all through. West Delhi, the largest parliamentary constituency in the city, encompasses a diverse range of

WEST DELHI

ELECTORS : TURNOUT

25.9L 58.8%

55.3% 42.2%

2.5% Others

Party Votes

BJP Kamaljeet Sehrawat 8,42,658

AAP (INDIA) Mahabul Mishra 6,43,645

Others 38,191

demographics and geographies, from the affluent neighbourhood of Dwarka to bustling Rajouri market, remote villages bordering Haryana and colonies inhabited by lower middle class.

Tiwari coasts to third win

Manoj Tiwari recorded a personal hat-trick from the North East Delhi constituency, whizzing past his Congress rival, former Jawaharal Nehru University Students' Union president Kanhaiya Kumar. The BJP winner went into a big lead from the outset of the counting and kept the momentum going with each round. The contest in North East Delhi was slated to be keen because of the significant Poorvanchali population. Both Tiwari and Kumar are from that community. The large Muslim electorate was expected to be advantageous to Congress. By 2pm on Tuesday, however, Kumar lagged Tiwari by over one lakh votes. Around 7.30pm, BJP had stretched its lead to a shade under 1.4 lakh, with 8.2 lakh votes in Tiwari's kitty against 6.8 lakh for Kumar. "I would like to thank PM Narendra Modi for this win," said Tiwari. "I also feel blessed to have received the support of

NORTH EAST DELHI

ELECTORS : TURNOUT

24.6L 62.9%

53.1% 44.2%

2.7% Others

Party Votes

BJP Manoj Tiwari 8,24,451

Cong (INDIA) Kanhaiya Kumar 6,85,673

Others 42,607

voters in my constituency. No doubt the responsibility has increased as BJP is ahead in all seven seats in Delhi. BJP means service. We will keep serving the people."

A see-saw victory in East

BJP's decision to replace incumbent MP Gautam Gambhir with former mayor Harsh Malhotra paid rich dividends as he defeated AAP's Kuldeep Kumar by a margin of 93,663 votes. Malhotra sprinted ahead of his rival in the first round itself, gaining a lead of 9,045 votes. However, there were some tense moments for him in the fifth round when his lead came down to just 125. The tremors didn't last long, though. By the 17th round, Malhotra's victory was near certain as his lead mounted to 83,821 votes, with the BJP candidate appearing to do well in Okhla, Gandhi Nagar, Jangpura, Krishna Nagar, Shahdara, Vishwas Nagar, Laxmi Nagar, Triokpur, Konoli and Patparganj. Malhotra later conveyed his gratitude to the Delhi voters and attributed the party's victory in all seats to its "accomplishments" over the past decade. Kumar, MLA from

EAST DELHI

ELECTORS : TURNOUT

21.2L 59.5%

52.6% 45.2%

2.2% Others


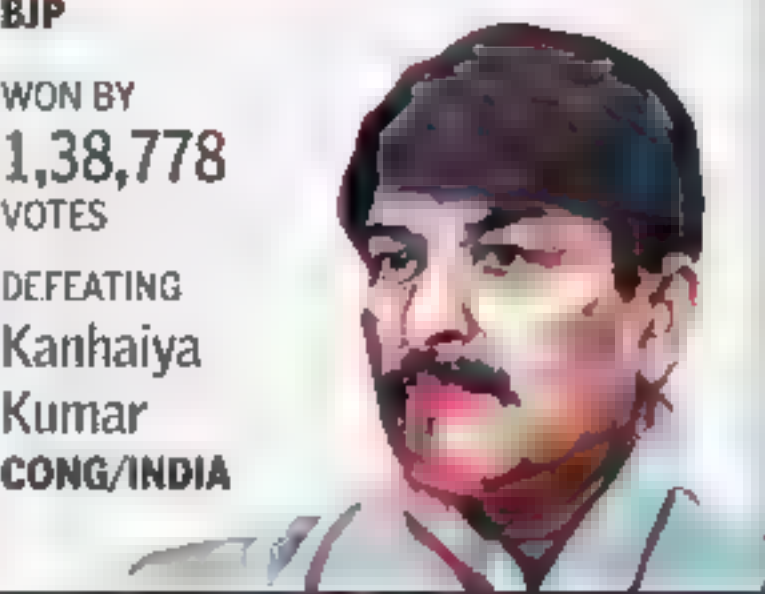

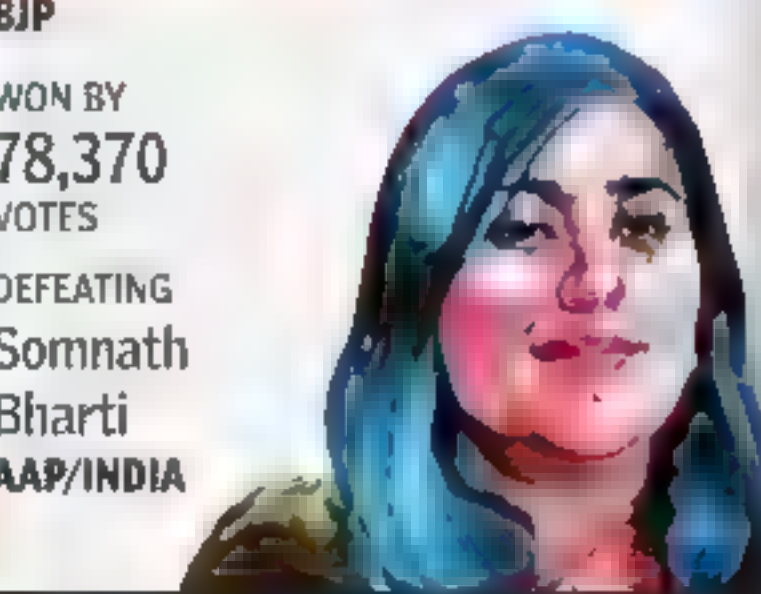
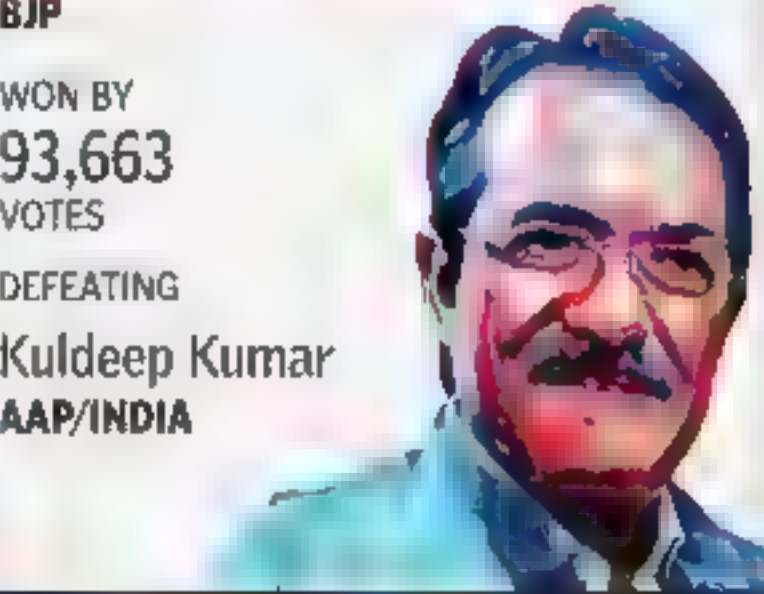
Party Votes

BJP Harsh Malhotra 6,64,819

AAP (INDIA) Kuldeep Kumar 5,71,156

Others 28,074

Konoli assembly constituency, acknowledged that the ultimate power lay with the public and said the party would analyse the factors that led to the unfavourable result.

CHANDNI CHOWK	NORTH EAST DELHI	NORTH WEST DELHI	NEW DELHI	EAST DELHI
<div>Meet Your MPs</div> <div>Praveen Khandelwal</div> <div>BJP</div> <div>WON BY 89,325 VOTES</div> <div>DEFEATING Jai Prakash Agarwal CONG/INDIA</div> <div></div>	<div>Manoj Tiwari</div> <div>BJP</div> <div>WON BY 1,38,778 VOTES</div> <div>DEFEATING Kanhaiya Kumar CONG/INDIA</div> <div></div>	<div>Yogender Chandoliya</div> <div>BJP</div> <div>WON BY 2,90,849 VOTES</div> <div>DEFEATING Udit Raj CONG/INDIA</div> <div></div>	<div>Bansuri Swaraj</div> <div>BJP</div> <div>WON BY 78,370 VOTES</div> <div>DEFEATING Somnath Bharti AAP/INDIA</div> <div></div>	<div>Harsh Deep Malhotra</div> <div>BJP</div> <div>WON BY 93,663 VOTES</div> <div>DEFEATING Kuldeep Kumar AAP/INDIA</div> <div></div>

New Tricks Needed Despite Hat-Trick

No Clear CM Face, Poor MCD Track Record And Over-Reliance On Modi BJP's Weak Points

Abhinav.Rajput@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Unlike the trend of BJP loosening its hold on several states it had swept in 2019, the party again held Delhi in a vice-like grip winning all the seven seats for the third consecutive general elections. And like in the elections of 2019, BJP's vote share was over 50% this year too.

The saffron party's Ramvir Singh Bidhuri won in South Delhi, Yogender Chandoliya in North-West Delhi, Bansuri Swaraj in New Delhi, Harsh Malhotra in East Delhi, Kamaljeet Sehrawat in West Delhi, Praveen Khandelwal in Chandni Chowk and Manoj Tiwari in North-East Delhi.

Except for Tiwari, the party had put up fresh candidates this year, and BJP city seniors said this helped counter anti-

incumbency and keep the cadres motivated. "When you are able to convince the electorate that your party is forming the govt at the centre, the fence-sitters also emerge in your support," explained a senior functionary.

Delhi BJP unit president Virendra Sachdeva said, "The people of the capital gave us this mandate for the works done by PM Narendra Modi for Delhi and for his visionary leadership." Party functionaries said that the campaign had been decided months in advance to centre on two talking points: the performance of PM Modi and the corruption allegations against AAP, including about the excise policy, renovation of the CM's house and financial discrepancies in Delhi Jal Board.

"AAP is no longer the party



NOT SO STRAIGHT FORWARD? The challenge for BJP is to replicate LS win in assembly polls next year and nip factionalism in the bud

seen as a group of honest people with noble intentions. The liquor policy has exposed them and three of their top leaders are in jail on corruption charges with the courts refusing to grant them bail," said Sachdeva.

With the Lok Sabha polls wrapped up, BJP anticipates the resounding win to provide it the impetus it needs for

the assembly elections eight months away. The party has encountered obstacles in the previous assembly polls, winning, respectively, just three and eight seats in 2015 and 2020, despite sweeping the stakes in the two Lok Sabha elections held a year prior to each in 2014 and 2019.

BJP insiders, therefore, feel the 2025 assembly polls could similarly prove arduous due not only to the absence of a compelling narrative to counter AAP's populist policy but also because of factionalism within the state unit.

A party functionary admitted that BJP, which last formed the government in Delhi in 1993, lacked a charismatic figure to rival Arvind Kejriwal. He also conceded an overreliance on the Modi factor and this places them at a disadvantage in state and

local polls. This was one of the reasons AAP was able to wrest control of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi from BJP in 2022.

The clean sweep will result in a larger share of development projects for the city, BJP functionaries hoped. One of them said, "With BJP also forming the govt at the Centre, Delhi can again expect a larger share of development funds as it has been doing. Delhi is the first state in the country that got the regional rapid rail besides the Delhi-Bombay, Delhi-Dehradun and Saharanpur expressways," he said, adding, "You can expect more such projects. There is also a huge demand for the expansion of Delhi Metro to the fringes of the city and we have committed to our voters that we would accomplish this."



POLL NATION

Wind, water and noise

Counting for the Chandni Chowk seat at Bharat Nagar (Ashok Vihar) wasn't done in the most salubrious of environs. The fans seemed to have been placed at an unsuitable height, causing the blades to hit the temporary pillars and create a disruptive din. Water was so constantly leaked from the AC units

Paper chase

Election officials at the Chandni Chowk constituency had to fall back on the old-world paper votes after an EVM developed technical problems and delayed the counting process. BJP and Congress polling agents demanded immediate rectification, forcing the officials to count the VVPAT slips

Cong needs gust to convert winds of change into wave

Abhinav.Rajput@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The Congress party's hopes of regaining lost ground in the national capital were tied to the Lok Sabha election, as they have been unable to win the Vidhan Sabha for a decade and the corporation for 17 years. However, the party failed to secure any seats in Delhi for the third consecutive time, this time in an alliance with AAP this time.

While Kanhaiya Kumar lost North East Delhi seat to Manoj Tiwari, Udit Raj was defeated by Yogendra Chandolia (North West). JP Aggarwal failed to best Praveen Khandelwal in Chandni Chowk.

This defeat marks a significant blow for Congress which had traditionally dominated Delhi's political scene, often sweeping all the seats in previous Lok Sabha elections prior to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's era at the Centre.

Several factors contributed to the party's campaign struggles, including the late announcement of candidates compared to AAP and BJP, the defection of state president Arvinder Singh Lovely to BJP just weeks before the polls, and the inability to motivate cadres and unite different factions within the party. The lack of a strong grassroots structure and the absence of charismatic leaders also hindered the party's chances.

In such elections where



WAY TO GO? A jubilant Congress supporter at AICC Headquarters

there are only two blocks (BJP and INDIA alliance), the contest becomes close. Had we managed these issues, then we could have dented BJP in some seats," said a senior Congress functionary. The vote percentage difference between Congress and BJP candidates was around 9% in the closely contested Chandni Chowk and North East Delhi constituencies.

However, Congress functionary Abhishek Dutt emphasised the party's good performance in several states which he believes could serve as a model for the party to revive its fortunes in Delhi: "We have done well in several states and have stopped BJP from the magic number of 272. This was possible because we raised issues that affect the common people such as unemployment and price rise... youths are upset with the

In game of thorns, AAP must keep flock together

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New Delhi: Aam Aadmi Party is now facing an existential crisis. The party, which formed govt in Delhi thrice in the past 10 years and expanded its footprint in some other states showcasing the "Delhi model of governance", couldn't claim even one seat in the Lok Sabha elections despite a seat-sharing arrangement with Congress.

With the assembly polls in the capital a few months away and its three top leaders—Kejriwal, former deputy CM Manish Sisodia and former health minister Satendar Jain—in jail, the beleaguered party faces the challenge of both running the govt for the full term and preparing for a crucial state election.

Kejriwal's arrest in the money laundering case linked to the now scrapped excise policy a week after announcement of the Lok Sabha poll schedule forced the party to launch a campaign with the slogan, "Jail ka jawab vote se", to generate a sympathy wave. The Delhi CM's personal appeal on these lines, however, failed to move the voters enough.

Political scientist and former JNU professor Neera Chandhoke said the charges of corruption against Kejriwal and his senior party colleagues have badly dented AAP's image. "Also, Kejriwal has failed to strengthen AAP's organisational structure and it has largely remained a one-leader party," she said.

Questioning AAP's alliance with Congress, she added: "I am not sure if the alliance actually worked on the ground and Congress and

AAP workers voted for each other's candidates in their respective constituencies."

With its vulnerabilities exposed, the party faces the huge challenge of keeping its flock together. The threat can come from both BJP and a resurgent Congress. Senior functionaries of both parties have claimed in private that many legislators and municipal councillors of Kejriwal's party are willing to jump ship.

If Kejriwal doesn't step down from CM's post despite being in jail, governance will suffer besides the Centre getting an opportunity to impose Central rule if it feels there would be dividends. Whether a replacement—be it Kejriwal's wife, Sunita, or someone else can be effective is a hypothetical question at this time.

AAP's Delhi state convener, Gopal Rai, said they fought this election in most adverse circumstances. "AAP gave a tough fight to BJP in Delhi with its rock-solid unity. BJP's margin is going to reduce on a big scale," he said.

Meanwhile, AAP has called for PM Narendra Modi's resignation, asserting that the LS election results reflected a clear mandate against BJP's politics of "hatred and dictatorship".

"People have voted to save Baba Saheb's Constitution. They have voted to save the reservation system in the country, which is for the Dalits, deprived, exploited, backward and tribal," Singh said

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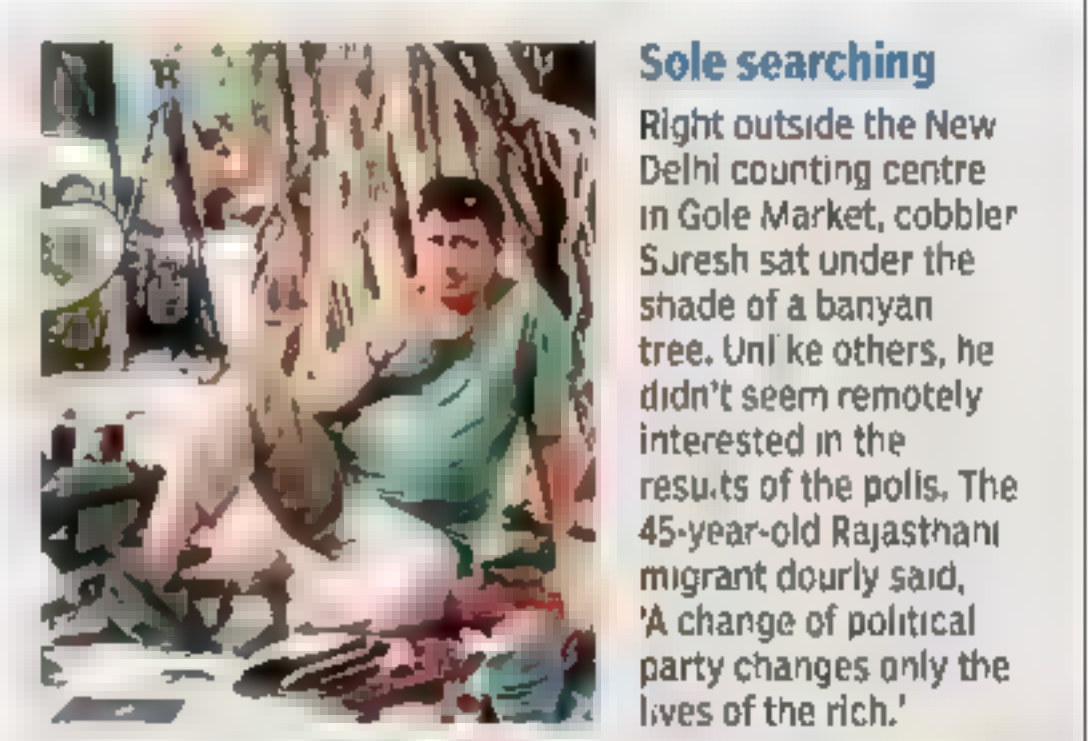
Going with the trend

Loud dholak beats resounded at the BJP state office on Pandit Pant Marg after early results indicated a BJP lead in Delhi. Around midday, however, there was a pause because the national result was provided room for circumspection. The drummers picked up again after a more definitive uptick in the national trend for the saffron party



Brotherhood of also-rans

"Haare hum, par mann se nahi haare (we lost the polls, not our spirit)," quipped a group of independent candidates during the counting in the South Delhi constituency. Among them were Chandrashekhar Singh Kushwaha who got 1,889 votes, Deepak Kapla (1,500), Ram Gopal (3,958), Arun Kumar (842), Shanker Dey (522), Poonam Srivastava (958) and Bhanu Lal Jain (514)



Sole searching

Right outside the New Delhi counting centre in Gole Market, cobbler Suresh sat under the shade of a banyan tree. Unlike others, he didn't seem remotely interested in the results of the polls. The 45-year-old Rajasthan migrant dourly said, "A change of political party changes only the lives of the rich."

NOT A vote-hungry candidate

In North East Delhi, Ravi Kiran Thilak Thatikonda, an independent candidate, was at the counting centre more to find out how many had opted for NOTA than voted for him. His campaign had been to discourage NOTA voting and he had distributed T-shirts bearing that message. "NOTA is a hoax. We have to make our voices heard," he smiled



Driving pleasure

Till 4pm, the Samaypur Badli road in North West Delhi constituency was almost empty, with only a few grocery shops operating. And while the road was barricaded since it led to the counting centre at Delhi Technological University, other streets going to and away from Rohini were unusually clear of the regular traffic jams

Business as unusual

The Night Cafe on the DTU campus is usually crammed with students. Business was lean after the university closed for vacations on May 25. On Tuesday, however, the till rang as party workers, poll officials and security personnel made a beeline for it since it was the only place they could find refreshments

Muslim vote fails to swing it for alliance in Delhi

Priyangi.Agarwal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Mehboob Alam, a 35-year-old real estate professional from New Delhi, closely followed the election results all day. However, he was left disappointed as the AAP-Congress alliance failed to secure a single seat in Delhi.

"It seems that our votes didn't count for much in Lok Sabha election, the community has limited influence in a direct contest against BJP. We are disappointed with the false promises of BJP spreading hate and community divide. However, we are hopeful in the upcoming assembly polls," Alam said.

According to the 2011 Census, Muslims constitute around 12.9% of Delhi's population. As per political estimates, North East Lok Sabha constituency currently has the highest percentage of Muslim voters at 20.7%, while other constituencies also have a significant Muslim population: Chandni Chowk (14%), East Delhi (16.8%), New Delhi (16.8%), North West Delhi (10.6%), South Delhi (7%), and West Delhi (6.8%).

North East constituency recorded the highest voting percentage at 58.3%, with three predominantly Muslim inhabited assembly constituencies—Seelampur, Mustafabad, and Babarpur—each seeing a voting percentage of over 65%. However, Congress candidate Kanhaiya

Kumar lost the seat by a margin of over 1.3 lakh votes.

Mohd Mushtaq from Joharipur said the public's choice leaned more towards BJP Adnan Zain, a trader in Nand Nagri, added, "The problem with Kanhaiya Kumar is that he did not visit the people on the ground as much as he should have. Giving passionate speeches online for impact is not enough. Having an interpersonal connection with the people you are representing is important."

Sami, a car service provider from northeast Delhi, said, "Those who voted in favour of BJP did not

do so for the goodwill of Manoj Tiwari, as he has barely done any work; it's because of Modi's brand appeal." He expressed hope that Tiwari would address issues like mosquitoes, waste management and drinking water in his third term.

Other influential Muslim-dominated areas in Delhi include Chandni Chowk, Matia Mahal and Ballamaran assembly constituencies in Chandni Chowk Lok Sabha constituency, which recorded voting percentages of 56.8%, 67.20%, and 64.7%, respectively. In East Delhi constituency, Okhla, a Muslim-dominated area, recorded a voting percentage of 52.2%.

Many minority community members attributed the impact on results to the lower voting percentage in Delhi vis-à-vis the 2019 and 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Sarim Ullah, a shopkeeper in Ballamaran, said that due to the blistering heat, many women did not step out to cast their votes.

S Khan, a local from Matia Mahal, said that safety and security were the primary concerns for voters in his neighbourhood. "We wanted a govt that treats everyone equally, besides providing security. The results were a setback for us, but I think if the voting percentage had been high, then Congress would have won the seat easily," he said.

In East Delhi constituency, Naseem, a 33-year-old resident, hoped for the AAP candidate to win, citing the party's work in providing free bus rides for women and water and electricity for all. Shareef Ahmad, a resident of Govindpuri in South Delhi, said the candidates who won had the support of the public and that INDIA bloc gave a tough fight to BJP across the country.

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LEFT DISAPPOINTED: Muslim voters showed up, but it didn't show up in Delhi's results

WEST DELHI	SOUTH DELHI	GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR	GHAZIABAD	FARIDABAD	GURGAON
Kamaljeet Sehrawat BJP WON BY 1,99,013 VOTES DEFEATING Mahabab Mishra AAP	Ramvir Singh Bidhuri BJP WON BY 1,24,333 VOTES DEFEATING Sahi Ram AAP	Mahesh Sharma BJP WON BY 5,59,472 VOTES DEFEATING Mahendra Singh Nagar SP/INDIA	Atul Garg BJP WON BY 3,36,965 VOTES DEFEATING Dolly Sharma CONG/INDIA	Krishan Pal Gurjar BJP WON BY 1,72,914 VOTES DEFEATING Mahendra Pratap Singh CONG/INDIA	Rao Inderjit Singh BJP WON BY 75,079 VOTES DEFEATING Raj Babbar CONG/INDIA

Margins Go South, But South Hry Stays With BJP

Inderjit hits super six in Gurgaon, beats Raj Babbar in close contest

Cong wins 5 seats; farmers' discontent and Agnipath take a toll on BJP's tally

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Gurgaon: After a suspense that stretched well into the afternoon, BJP's Rao Inderjit Singh defeated his nearest rival - actor-politician Raj Babbar of Congress - by more than 75,000 votes.

This marked his sixth win as MP and fourth from Gurgaon since it became a Lok Sabha seat in 2008. His victory margin, however, came down drastically from 4 lakh in 2019. The day began with the numbers inclined towards Babbar. The Congress candidate maintained a steady lead of 30,000-40,000 till 2pm, after which the tables turned towards Rao Inderjit. By the end of the day, the BJP veteran had secured 75,079 votes more than his rival.

Of the 16 lakh-odd votes that were polled in Gurgaon, Rao Inderjit bagged over 8 lakh while Babbar had 7.1 lakh votes in his kitty. Officials said the Congress candidate took the lead in the morning as votes from Nuh were counted first. Babbar maintained a lead for 6 hours straight as he bagged a majority of votes from the three assembly constituencies of Nuh - Punhana, Ferozpur Jhurka and Nuh.

In the morning, when Babbar was leading by around 40,000 votes, he said in Rewari, "This is a decision of the people. And it is the people who are leading."



NARROWING GAP: Inderjit secured 75,079 votes more than his rival

However, when the trends started trickling in from Gurgaon and Badshapur, the tally inclined towards Rao Inderjit. Barring Nuh, he managed a decent lead from other seats.

According to reports, the BJP candidate's performance was not up to the mark in Patauli, Rewari and Bawal, which was against the party's expectations. Political analysts said BJP's lead in Gurgaon proved residents gave preference to national issues over local ones, such as the state's unemployment rate, civic infrastructure and others.

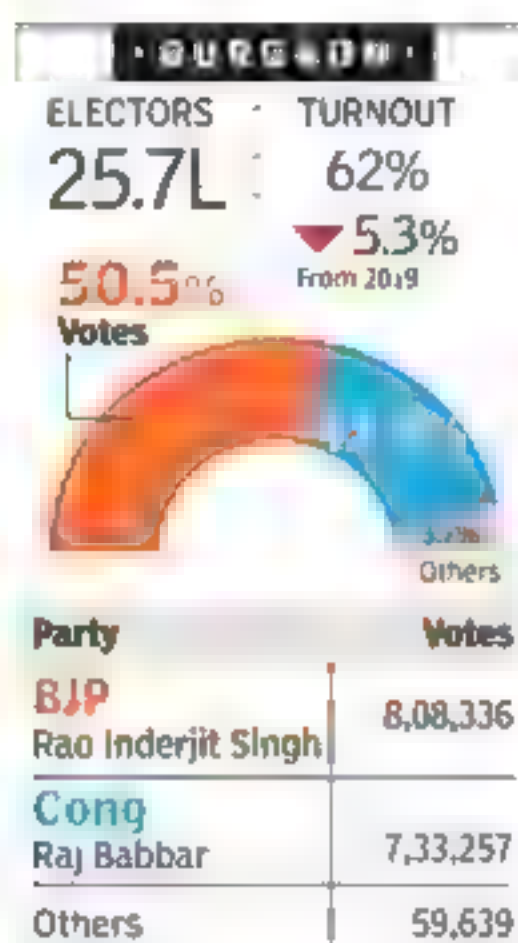
Through its campaign, Congress reached out to voters on local issues and hoped to capitalise on the anti-incumbency sentiment, particularly among farmers and members of the Jat community. BJP

spoke on national topics and achievements of the Modi gov't at the Centre.

In the Ahirwal region, considered a stronghold for Rao Inderjit, there was discontent with the gov't over Agnipath, the short-term Army recruitment scheme. Most youths, who grow up hoping to join the Army some day, said their dreams were shattered with the gov't's decision.

Launched in June 2022, the Agnipath scheme has reduced the service period for new joiners to just four years. Agniveers - as youths would be called after joining the force - would not get any additional post-retirement benefits either.

The short-term scheme has reverberated through the campaign in the region, with Congress vowing to scrap it and



BJP promising a review to offer best opportunities to young stars. The other candidates JJP's Rahul Yadav, Fazilpuria, Vijay Khatana of BSP and So-Rab Khan of INLD - failed to make any impact. Singer Fazilpuria got 13,278 votes, Khatana bagged 8,946 and Khan garnered 4,917 votes. In 2019, Rao Inderjit had secured 8.8 lakh votes or 61% of the total from Gurgaon. He defeated Congress's Captain Ajay Singh Yadav who received 4.9 lakh votes.

In the 2014 election, when Inderjit quit Congress and joined BJP, he trounced Zakir Hussain of INLD by 2.7 lakh votes, which was over 20% of the total votes in the seat. That year, BJP secured a vote share of 48.8% in the seat.

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Gurgaon: BJP lost considerable ground in the state - failing to replicate its performance in 2014 and 2019, when it bagged all 10 seats - but managed to hold on to the three south Haryana constituencies of Gurgaon, Faridabad, and Bhiwani. Mahendra Singh Congress gave BJP a tough fight, winning 5 seats - Rohtak, Hisar, Sirsa, Ambala and Sonapat. Apart from the three seats in the south, BJP secured Karnal and Kurukshetra in the north.

While BJP managed to retain the three south Haryana seats, its victory margin nosedived. Rao Inderjit Singh of BJP defeated Congress candidate Raj Babbar by 75,079 votes in Gurgaon. In 2019, Rao Inderjit had trounced Congress's Ajay Singh Yadav by 3.9 lakh votes.

In Bhiwani, Mahendra Singh won against Congress's Rao Dan Singh by 41,510 votes. In 2019, he had won by a margin of 4.4 lakh votes against Congress rival Shruti Chaudhary.

In Faridabad, Krishan Pal Gurjar won by more than 1.7 lakh votes against Mahender Pratap Singh of Congress. In the last election, Gurjar had defeated Congress's Avtar Singh Bhadana by 6.4 lakh votes.

Despite an apparent dis-



VICTORY BEATS: BJP supporters celebrate Rao Inderjit's win in Gurgaon

content against local MPs, BJP had decided to go ahead with old-timers in south Haryana. Rao Inderjit from Gurgaon, Gurjar in Faridabad, and Dhanraj Singh from Bhiwani. Mahendra Singh were among 4 sitting MPs across the state on whom the party had reposed faith.

BJP candidate Arvind Sharma, who had won from Rohtak the last time, lost by 3.4 lakh votes against Deepender Singh Hooda, the son of Congress veteran and former CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

So, what went against BJP

this time?

Sources in the party admitted there was a discontent among people against the state gov't, particularly among farmers and members of the Jat community.

"Yes, farmers and rural voters drifted away from the party, but those in urban areas aligned with us. Urban voters played a big role in BJP's win in Gurgaon and Faridabad," said a BJP functionary.

Agnipath, the gov't's short-term Army recruitment scheme that left many youths unhappy because of the re-

duced job tenure, also had an impact on the results.

In Kosi - which is in Rewari but part of the Rohtak Lok Sabha seat - Congress bagged a lead of a few thousand votes this time. In 2019, Kosi had voted overwhelmingly for BJP.

Arvind Sa.ni, the media in charge of BJP in the state, accused the opposition parties of spreading a false narrative against the gov't.

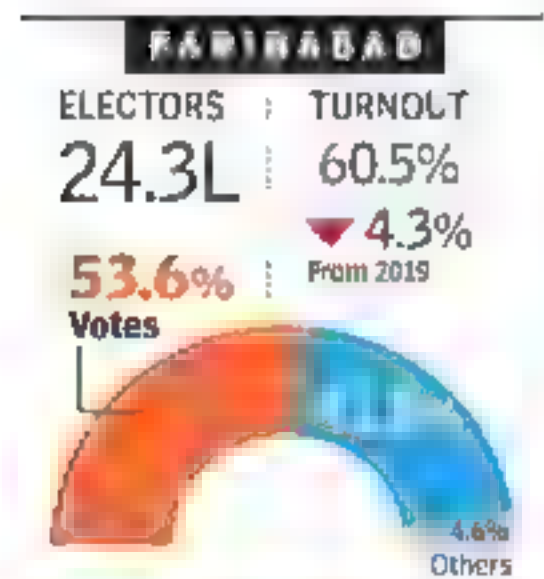
"Despite all of this, we retained half the seats after being in power for 10 years," he added.

BJP's Gurjar makes it a three-peat in Faridabad

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Faridabad: BJP candidate Krishan Pal Gurjar secured a third consecutive victory in the Lok Sabha elections, defeating Mahender Pratap Singh of Congress by a margin of 1,72,914 votes. From the outset, Gurjar maintained a steady lead throughout the counting process, emerging victorious with a total of 7,88,569 votes, while his main rival Singh secured 6,15,655 votes, which accounted for 41.8% of the total votes cast.

However, compared to his resounding victory in 2019 - when he won by 5.38 lakh votes - the incumbent MP's winning margin witnessed a significant decline. His vote share dropped from an impressive 68.68% in



2019 elections to 53.6% in the 2024 contest. Gurjar (67) had won the 2014 elections by a margin of 4.6 lakh votes. Faridabad seat covers two districts, Faridabad and Palwal. The nine assembly segments include Hathin, Hodal, Palwal, Prithla, Faridabad NIT, Backhal, Faridabad, Ballabgarh and Tigaon.

People have voted for development and good governance, Gurjar said, adding he is committed to delivering on these promises. "As I embark on my third term, I pledge to work to address the needs and aspirations of people. I will dedicate myself to implementing initiatives that improve the lives of every citizen, ensuring that no one is left behind," he said.

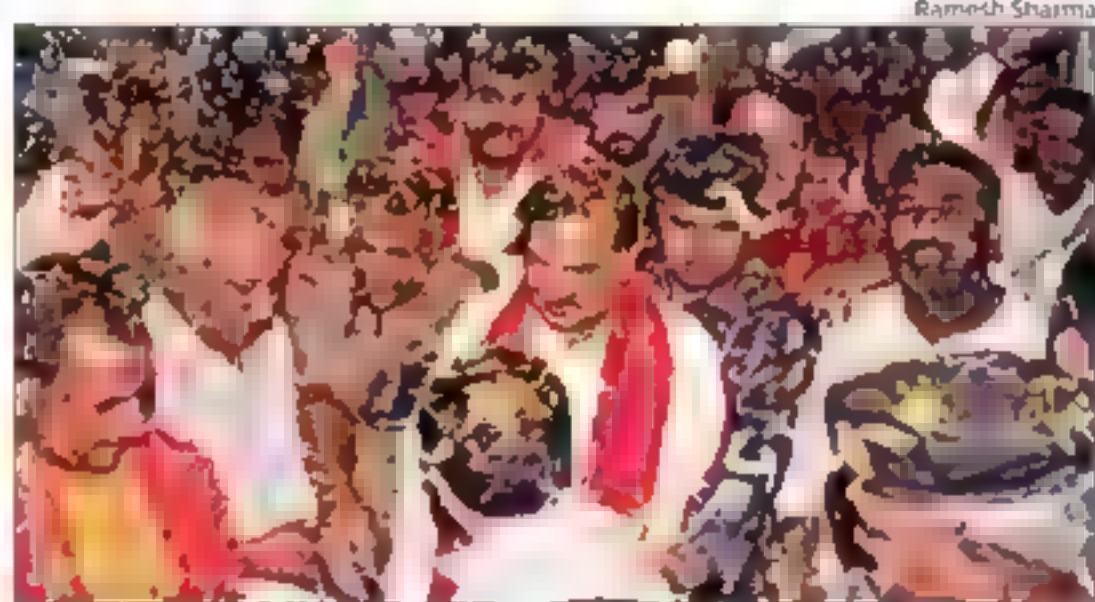
It's a hat-trick for Sharma in GB Nagar, victory margin of 5.6L biggest in state

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Noida: BJP's Mahesh Sharma secured his third win from Gautam Budh Nagar, leading by a margin of 5.6 lakh votes, the highest among the 80 seats in UP and over three times the 1.5 lakh victory margin of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Varanasi.

Sharma secured 8.6 lakh votes, about 59.7% of the 1,47,244 votes cast in the NCR constituency, to better his performances in the last two elections - he won the Lok Sabha polls by a margin of 2.8 lakh votes in 2014 and by 3.4 lakh votes in 2019.

SP's Mahendra Nagar finished second with nearly 3 lakh votes, which is 20.8% of the vote share, while BSP's RS Solanki bagged 2.5 lakh votes (17.5%). Twelve other candidates, including four Independents, were in the fray but none of them could garner more than 4,000 votes. NOTA accounted for fourth largest share



IT GETS BETTER: Mahesh Sharma meets supporters after the win

of votes at 10,324.

Sharma maintained a consistent lead since the counting began. Till 10am, he had cornered 73,925 votes compared to Nagar's 27,279 and Solanki's 18,108. By noon, Sharma's margin widened to 3.3 lakh, while Nagar was still at 1.15 lakh and Solanki at 78,682. By 5 pm, Sharma took a formidable lead of more than 5 lakh votes.

Sharma's win underscores his firm hold in the region and highlights the sustained support for the BJP in both

urban and semi urban areas.

Sharma told TOI that the huge victory margin reflected the love and affection the people showered on him.

"I congratulate the people and party workers for their unprecedented love and support for letting the lotus (the party's symbol) bloom under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I am overwhelmed by your love and affection. We will together make a strong and developed Gautam Budh

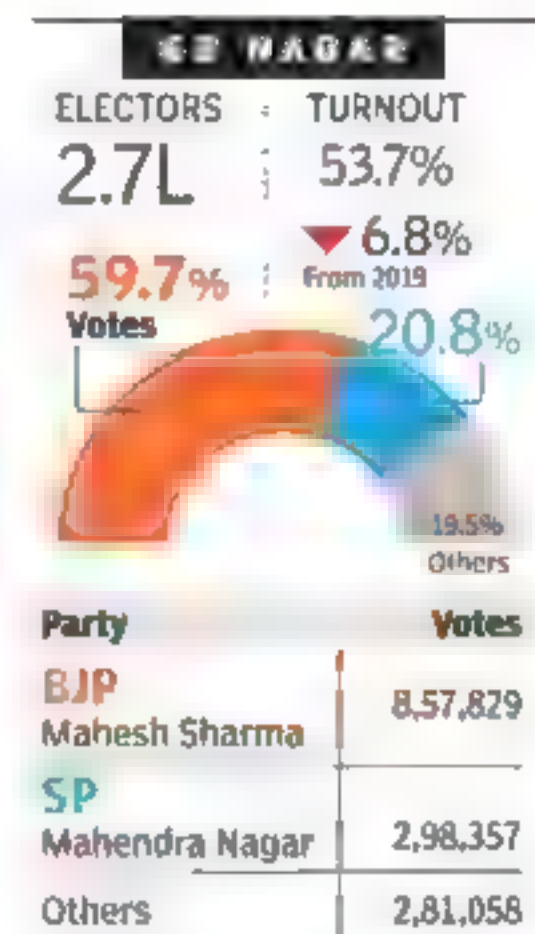
Nagar," he posted on X (formerly Twitter).

Sharma began his political journey as a grassroots worker but rose through the ranks quickly. He contested the Lok Sabha election from GB Nagar in 2009 and secured 2.3 lakh votes but lost to BSP's Surendra Nagar by 16,000 votes. In 2012, he won the assembly elections from Noida with 77,226 votes, defeating BSP's Omdutt Sharma, who secured 49,582 votes.

In 2014, riding the 'Modi wave', Sharma cornered 5,99,702 votes, defeating SP's Narendra Bhati, who garnered over 3 lakh votes. Sharma served as the MoS (Independent) culture and tourism in Narendra Modi's cabinet.

In 2019, Sharma was polled 8,30,812 votes to defeat his nearest rival, BSP's Satveer Nagar, by a 3.4 lakh margin.

SP's national spokesperson Pradeep Bhati said despite the party's poor show in GB Nagar, it made gains across UP - with 37 seats. SP put its



best Lok Sabha performance in the state, while Congress won six seats (its vote share rising from 6.5% to nearly 10%). "The INDIA alliance has got a lot of support from people who are badly affected by the policies of the Modi gov't. It will not be easy for the BJP to form the gov't," Bhati said.

Saffron run unbroken in Gzb as Garg cruises: 'Faced dissent, misinformation but all well now'

Abhijay Jha @timesgroup.com

Ghaziabad: BJP's Atul Garg defeated his nearest rival Dolly Sharma of Congress - by a margin of over 3.3 lakh votes, securing over 58% of the total votes polled.

It's also the party's third biggest victory margin in the state after Mahesh Sharma's 5.6 lakh from GB Nagar and Rahul Gandhi's 3.9 lakh from Rae Bareilly.

This marked the fourth consecutive win for BJP in Ghaziabad, considered a "safe seat" for the party.

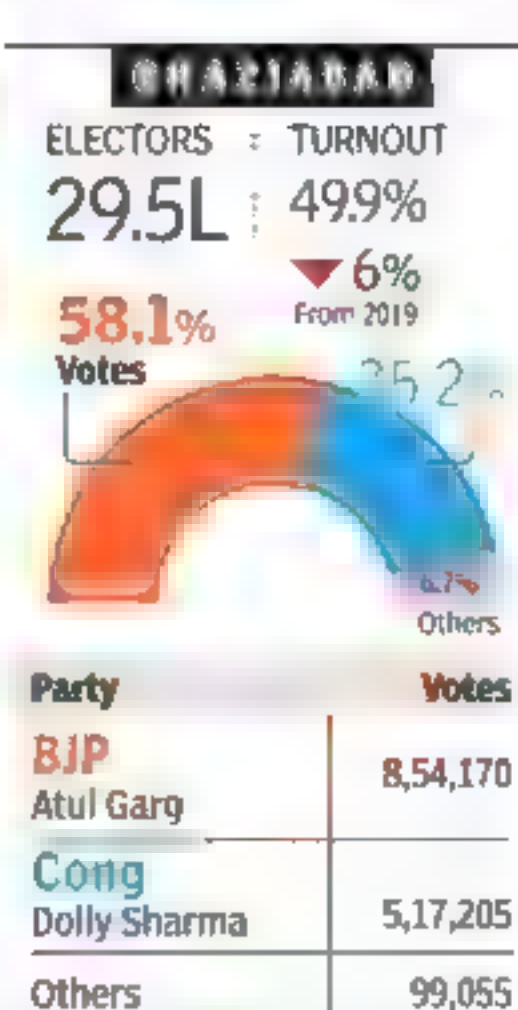
Since 2009, when Ghaziabad was carved out of Hapur after delimitation, BJP has never lost a general election from there.

Garg (66), who has held the Ghaziabad assembly seat twice in 2017 and 2022, thanked party workers and



PM Modi, who held a roadshow in the city to campaign for him.

"Through my campaign, I kept telling the electorate that I am seeking votes in the name of Narendra Modi. I owe my



victory to Modi ji and party workers," he said.

Garg - who replaced VK

Singh as the candidate this time - said he faced a lot of discontent among voters, particularly among the Rajputs who were unhappy with the party as few members from the community were given tickets.

"This win is personally relieving for me. A lot of misinformation was spread against me by the opposition. I battled dissent as well. But as they say, all's well that ends well. NDA, under Modi ji, is set to create history by forming the gov't the third time in a row," he added.

Garg, who maintained his lead from the first round itself, bagged 8.5 lakh votes by the end of the 62nd round. Dolly Sharma of Congress - the INDIA Bloc candidate - secured 5.2 lakh votes. She secured 35.2% of the total votes polled while Garg bagged over 58%.

"Honestly speaking, I was

hopeful of a win this time. I had worked hard for it. But even in defeat, I can say this is Congress's best performance in years. It was a battle well-fought," she said.

In the last Lok Sabha polls of 2019, Sharma managed just 7% of the votes polled and lost to VK Singh, emerging third.

BSP's Nand Kishor PunDIR ended up with a little over 75,000 votes.

"At least we tried. The final verdict, however, rests with 'janta janardan'. We respect their decision," he said.

Apart from BJP, Congress and BSP candidates, there were 11 more nominees in the fray from the seat.

At 0.47%, their combined

3 TAKES FROM WINNERS

What do you have to say to voters?

- I want to thank the people of Gurgaon and Ahirwal for showing trust in me and giving me a sixth term as MP. I also want them to be prepared for upcoming assembly elections.
- What is your main focus for the next term?
 - I will complete pending development projects that could not be completed in the previous term and focus on issues that need to be addressed.
- One promise you'll make to voters right now
 - I promise people of my constituency that I will be available for them and work for their betterment.

Krishan Pal Gurjar | Faridabad

What do you have to say to voters?

- People have once again put their faith in the leadership of PM Narendra Modi and BJP. This victory is a testament to voters' desire for development and good governance.
- What is your main focus for the next term?
 - I will prioritise development and effective governance. Primary objectives will be to improve infrastructure, ensure a cleaner Faridabad, create jobs and improve city's connectivity.
- One promise you'll make to voters right now
 - Voters have placed their faith in my abilities and vision. I am deeply humbled by this trust, and I am committed to working tirelessly to meet their expectations.

Mahesh Sharma | Gautam Budh Nagar

What do you have to say to voters?

- The 5.6 lakh victory margin reflects their love and affection. But this was expected as we have done a lot of development work in the district. I express my gratitude to the people.
- What is your main focus for the next term?
 - The Lok Sabha election results have just been declared. We will sit together soon and discuss our priorities and development issues for the next term.
- One promise you'll make to voters right now
 - It will be premature to comment, but builder-buyer issues, pollution and farmers' demands are important, and we will address them at the earliest.



Atul Garg | Ghaziabad

What do you have to say to voters?

- Dhanyavad (thank you). I will strive to make India and the district 'Viksit Rashtra' and 'Viksit Ghaziabad'.
- What is your main focus for the next term?
 - Will take up unfinished projects, including international stadium and metro extension. Efforts will be made to start more flight services from the Hindon civil terminal.
- One promise you'll make to voters right now
 - I will be with the people day and night. As their representative, I will take up local issues in the parliament and coordinate with the Centre and ministries too.

MINISTERS IN THE FRAY

Pass Or Fail?

AMETHI, UP

Smriti Irani

BJP

LOST TO

KL Sharma

Cong

BY

1,67,196

VOTES

MUMBAI NORTH, MAHA

Piyush Goyal

BJP

WON AGAINST

Bhushan Patil

Cong

BY

3,57,608

VOTES

SAMBALPUR, ODISHA

Dharmendra Pradhan

BJP

WON AGAINST

Pranab Prakash Das

BJP

BY

1,19,836

VOTES

GUNA, MP

Jyotiraditya Scindia

BJP

WON AGAINST

Yadvendra Rao Deshraj

Cong

BY

5,40,929

VOTES

PORBANDAR, GUJARAT

Mansukh Mandaviya

BJP

WON AGAINST

Lalit Vasoya

Cong

BY

3,83,360

VOTES

NAGPUR, MAHA

Nitin Gadkari

BJP

WON AGAINST

Vikas Thakre

Cong

BY

1,37,603

VOTES

ALWAR, RAJASTHAN

Bhupender Yadav

BJP

WON AGAINST

Lalit Yadav

Cong

BY

48,282

VOTES

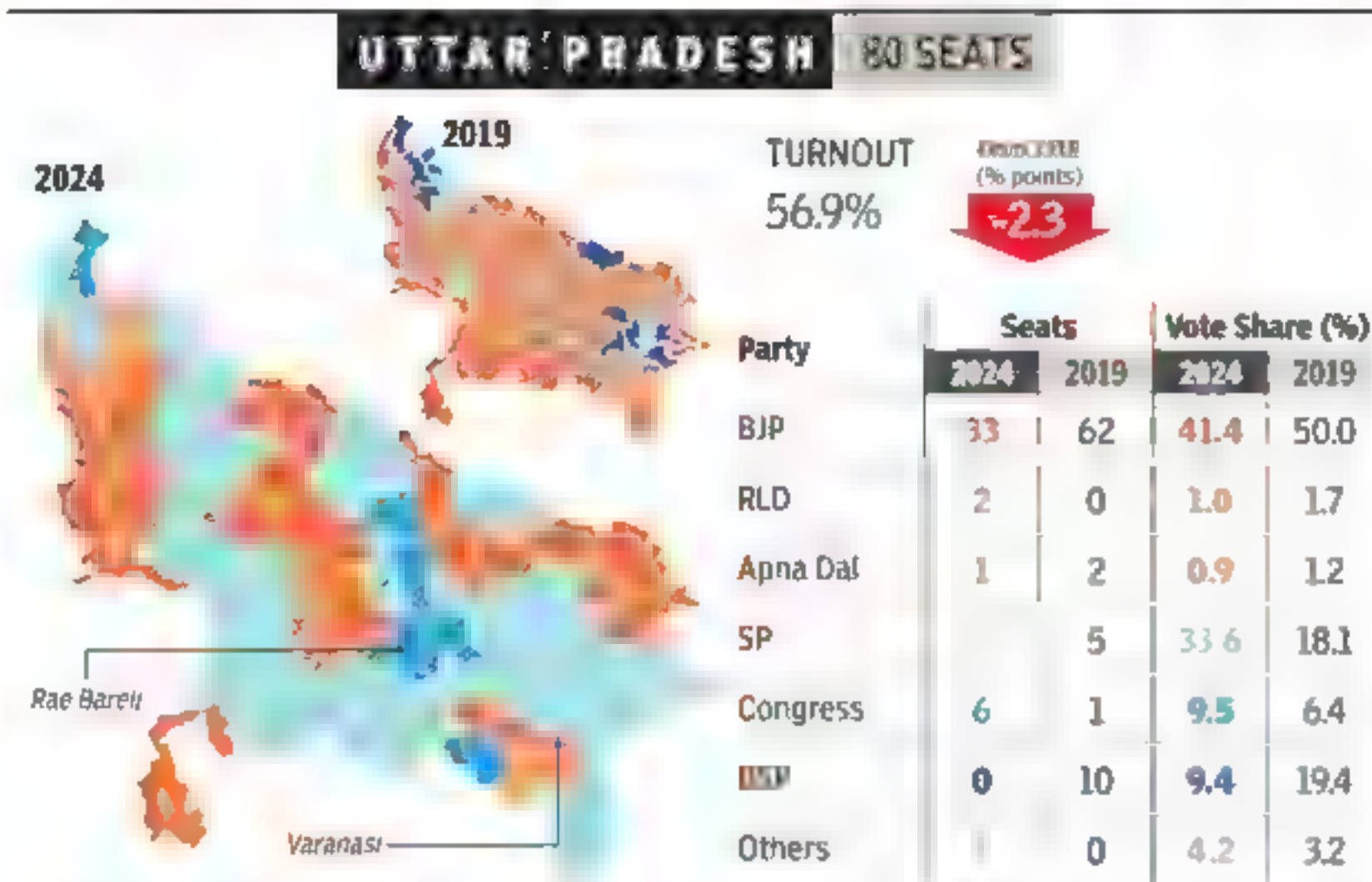
Change Rides On SP's Cycle

SP-Cong Bag 43, Limit BJP+ To Just 36; BSP Decimated

TEAM TOI

Lucknow: In a stunning setback to NDA in UP, SP-Cong combine won 43 Lok Sabha seats, restricting BJP and its allies to just 36 which was a loss of 28 seats compared to the 64 seats that NDA won in 2019. BJP vote share dropped from 49.97% in 2019 to just over 41% this time. SP and Congress won 37 and 6 seats, respectively — a significant rise of 37 seats than in 2019 when the two had together won six seats.

Smriti Irani was among the seven Union ministers who lost in the state. Irani's loss to Gandhifamily loyalist KL Sharma in Amethi by a margin of over 1.6 lakh votes evinced keen interest as she had defeated Rahul Gandhi in this seat last time by over 55,000 votes.



While PM Narendra Modi and defence minister Rajnath Singh saw their victory margins falling, Rahul won by over 3.9 lakh votes. SP won all five seats from where members of the Yadav first family contested — Kannauj (Akhilesh Yadav), Mairpur (Dimple Yadav), Badaun (Aditya Yadav), Farrukhabad (Akshay Yadav) and Azamgarh (Dharmendra Yadav).

SP's emphatic win was a perceptible increase compared to 2019 when the party, in alliance with BSP, could win only five seats.

Congress, too, sprung a surprise by winning six seats including both its stronghold of Rae Bareilly and Amethi. Congress also won from Saharanpur after a gap of 40 years.

Nagina was won by Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) chief Chandrashekhar Azad, in a development that endorsed his political rise in west UP. At the same time, Mayawati led BSP faced a complete decimation with its vote share dipping from over 19% in 2019 to just around 9% this time, turning the spotlight back on the Dalit outfit's

With 11 seats, desert state helps INDIA quench thirst

TEAM TOI

Jaipur: Rajasthan's Lok Sabha mandate Tuesday defied predictions to dash BJP's hopes of making a clean sweep of the desert state's 25 Lok Sabha seats for the third consecutive election.

Congress, along with its INDIA bloc partners, won 11 seats to not only dent BJP's ambitions but also prove wrong exit poll projections that had given the saffron party around 20 seats.

While BJP was restricted to 14 seats, Congress snagged eight, just over six months after the saffron party unseated the erstwhile the Ashok Gehlot govt in the assembly polls.

INDIA bloc partners won in Sikar (CPM's Anura Ram, Banswara (BAP's Rajkumar Roat) and Nagaur (RJP's Hanuman Beniwal).

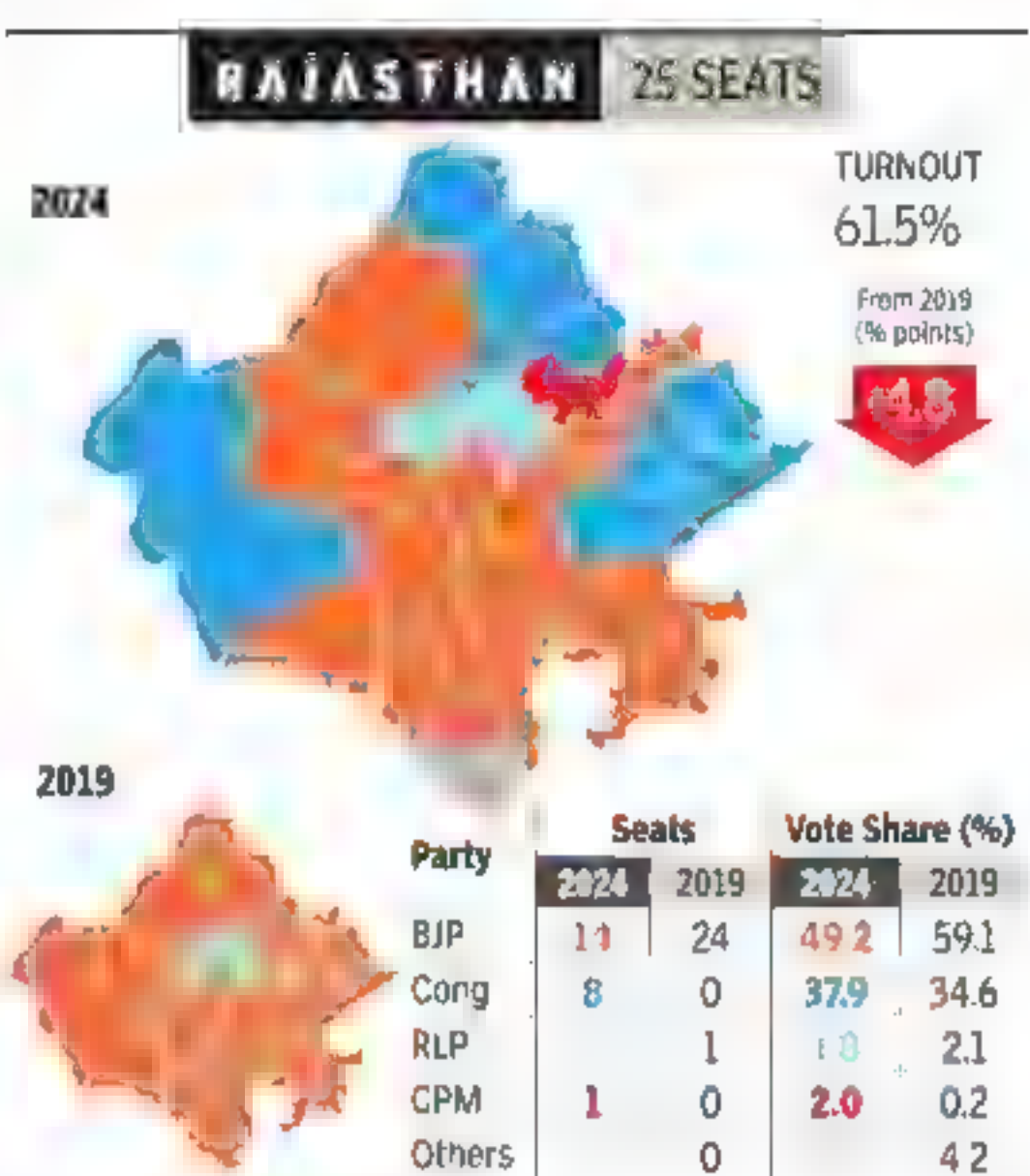
BJP's vote share dipped from 59.1% in 2019 to 49.2%, reflecting the party's sudden slide after a strong showing in the assembly polls.

Anti incumbency against sitting MPs, the supposedly underwhelming performance of the new state govt and Congress's poll campaign focused on safeguarding the Constitution and SC-ST reservations are being cited as the decisive factors in the poll.

Victory margins of Congress in six of the eight seats it won were less than a lakh votes each. Also, most of the seats that Congress and its allies won had voted in Phase I on April 19.

Among the Phase-II seats, which went to polls on April 26, Congress won Tonk-Sawai Madhopur and Barmer while BAP got Banswara. PM Modi's "mangasutra" remark criticising Congress's wealth redistribution promise was first heard at a rally in Banswara on April 24.

Union minister Kailash



Choudhary lost badly from Barmer, finishing third. Congress candidate Ummedaram Beniwal defeated independent candidate and sitting MP, MLA Ravindra Singh Bhati by 1.2 lakh votes from here.

Union ministers Bhupendra Yadav (Alwar) and Arjun Ram Meghwal (Bikaner) won by slim margins, while Gajendra Singh Shekhawat (Jodhpur) recorded a convincing victory by 1.1 lakh votes. Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla won Kota by around 42,000 votes.

BJP's loss in Bharatpur, which is CM Bhajan Lal Sharma's home turf, left the saffron brigade perplexed. There, Congress greenhorn Sanjana Jaiswal defeated former MP Ramswaroop Koli of BJP by nearly 52,000 votes.

Last Rajasthan saw a strong performance from Congress. The party also did well in north and northeast Rajasthan, winning Ganganagar, Churu and Jhunjhunu. In west Rajasthan, Congress won Barmer, but former CM Gehlot's son, Vaibhav, lost Jalore by over 2 lakh votes.

BJP's Mahima Kumari Mewar had the biggest win margin, defeating Congress's Damodar Gurjar by 3.9 lakh votes in Rajasamand. The closest contest was for Jaipur Rural, where BJP's Rao Rajendra Singh defeated Congress's Anil Chopra by 1,815 votes.

Ex-CM Gehlot wrote on X, "The first phase of voting in Rajasthan sent a message to the entire country that the dictatorial nature of this government can be fought against. The wave that started in the first phase in Rajasthan reached the entire country. India alliance winning double digit seats in Rajasthan shows that the public felt that despite good schemes and good governance, BJP misled people and took votes and formed the government (in Rajasthan). I think that as a kind of atonement, the public has taught BJP a lesson (in LS polls)."

Minority report: 4/4 for SP's Muslim picks

TEAM TOI

Lucknow: All four Samajwadi Party (SP) Muslim candidates fielded came out with flying colours despite facing tough BJP competition as the community voted en bloc in favour of the Akhilesh Yadav led party as well as his INDIA ally Congress.

SP fielded just four Muslims in a bid to shrug off its image as a party of Muslims and Yadavs (MY). This was against 20 put into the fray by BSP. The pattern was so stark that the 20 BSP candidates not only failed to win but

managed to get a very small share of votes. The four SP Muslim winners were Iqbal Hasan (Kairana), Mohinul lah Nadvi (Rampur), Zia Ur Rehman (Sambhal) and Afzal Ansari (Ghazipur).

The outcome this time is a far cry from not too long ago when Muslims were seen as a deciding factor on at least a dozen seats of BJP-governed UP's 80 Lok Sabha seats.

Then came a stage when BJP managed to bring most castes under Hindutva umbrella, rendering minorities' votes almost redundant. The state's 19% Muslim population was regarded by many as fragmented "tactical voters" who would vote for anyone in a position to defeat the saffron party.

That pattern has snapped this time, with Muslims managing to break the two

THE GAME CHANGERS

moulds and voting as a homogeneous entity for SP and INDIA bloc, irrespective of the candidate.

As per the exit polls assessments available in public domain, 87% of the Muslim votes polled went to the INDIA bloc across the state which reflected a massive increase of 38% from 2019 polls. Most of these voters — 34% — were to be precise — were those who voted for BSP in the last parliamentary polls. The exit polls found that only 2% of the Muslim votes went to BSP down from 36% in 2019. The exit poll has also found that against the 12% Muslim votes that went to BJP in the last Lok Sabha elections, this time only 6% went to the saffron party.

BJP made Muslims a large part of its 2024 Lok Sabha campaign, with various party leaders and even Prime

Minister Narendra Modi asking the community to vote keeping in mind the future of the generations to come. In UP, the coming together of Congress and SP worked to consolidate the community votes in a big way. The growing perception in the community that Mayawati had sided with BJP only helped the opposition alliance better.

In 2019 LS polls, 6 Muslims made it to Parliament, three of whom were from Mayawati's party — Danish Ali (Amroha: BSP), Afzal Ansari (Ghazipur: BSP) and Fazlur Rehman (Saharanpur: BSP).

HILL STATES DO NOT CHANGE COLOUR

Kings & queen in all 4 HP seats swear by saffron

TEAM TOI

Shimla: The "Modi factor" appears to have done the trick once again for BJP in Himachal Pradesh, making it a hat-trick of victories for the party in all four Lok Sabha seats.

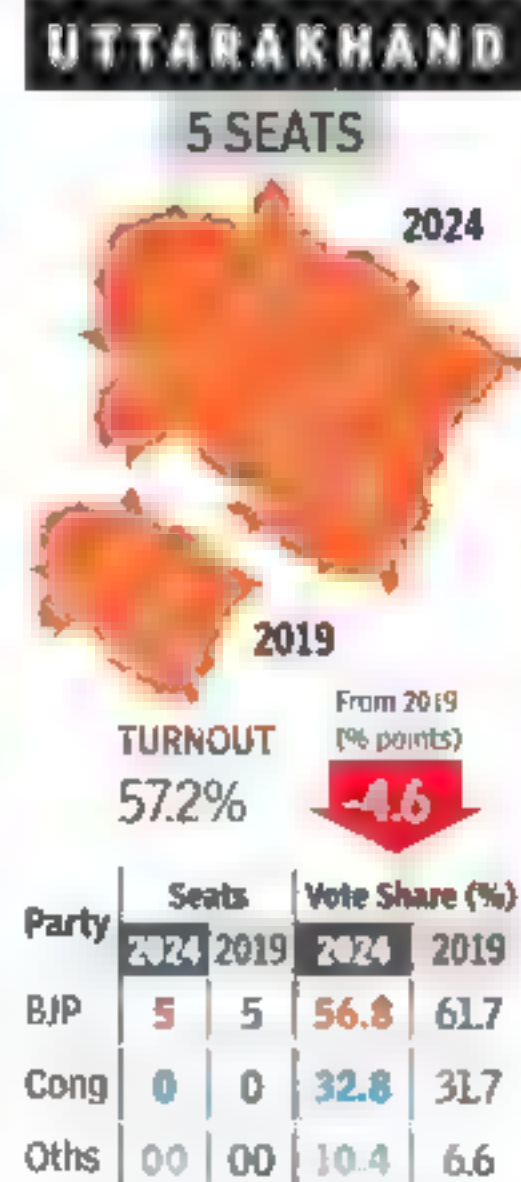
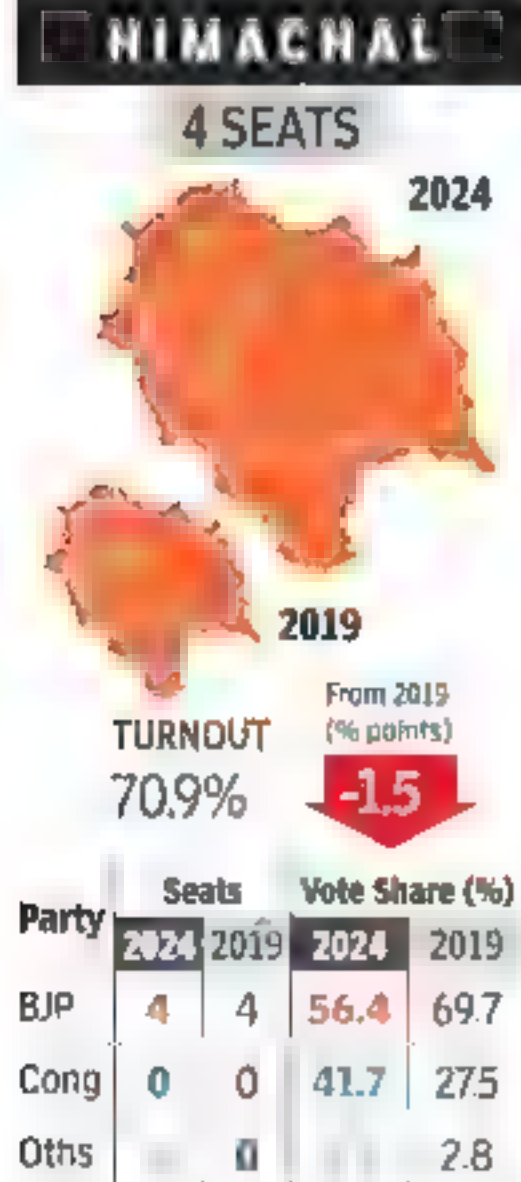
After failing to open its account in the 2014 and 2019 LS polls, the governing Congress's hopes of victory were

It's a five-star performance by BJP, and a hat-trick too

TEAM TOI

Dehradun: With a hat trick of wins in Lok Sabha polls in Uttarakhand, BJP has consolidated its position further in the Himalayan state. It registered comfortable wins in all five seats of Garhwal, Haridwar, Nainital-Udham Singh Nagar, Tehri Garhwal and Almora.

In particular, the clinching of two crucial seats of Haridwar and Almora.



Mukesh Agnihotri and his daughter, Aastha Agnihotri, but they refused, citing family reasons. There was also speculation that CM Sukhdev Singh Sukhu's wife would contest, but the party finally settled on former Una MLA Satpal Raizada.

Congress's attempt to make Agniveer, the old pension scheme and expansion of the rail network as election issues did not help it against BJP.

Saffron candidate Kangana Ranaut won in Mandi. Congress politicians had targeted her on the "beef" issue but it seems BJP's slogan "Mandi ki Beti" and Modi's defence of her worked in her favour, as did support from women voters.

Congress candidate and state PWD minister Vikramaditya Singh, son of the late former CM Virbhadr Singh and state Congress president Pratibha Singh, could not cash in on the "royal" factor or developmental works carried out by his late father in Mandi Lok Sabha area.

BJP had relied on sitting MP Suresh Kashyap by fielding him once again from Shimla, while Congress had fielded Kasauli MLA Vinod Sultanpuri, whose father, the late KD Sultanpuri, had won this seat six times. But Kashyap managed to win.

In Kangra, after BJP denied a ticket to sitting MP Kishan Kapoor, who had won the 2019 LS election by 4,77,623 votes, and fielded Rajeev Bhardwaj from this seat, Congress was hoping to win and had fielded former Union minister Anand Sharma. But BJP managed to counter Sharma by projecting Bhardwaj as a "son of the soil". Kangra's voters were also not happy with the representation of the constituency in govt

dwar and Garhwal, where ex-CM Trivendra Singh Rawat and BJP's national spokesperson Anil Baluni were in the fray respectively, is being considered by analysts as the highlights of the win this time since Baluni was up against former state Congress chief Ganesh Godiyal (who put up a good fight) while Trivendra battled it out against ex-CM Harish Rawat's son Virender whose campaign was largely helmed by his father.

29-0: MP healer for BJP, horror for Cong

TEAM TOI

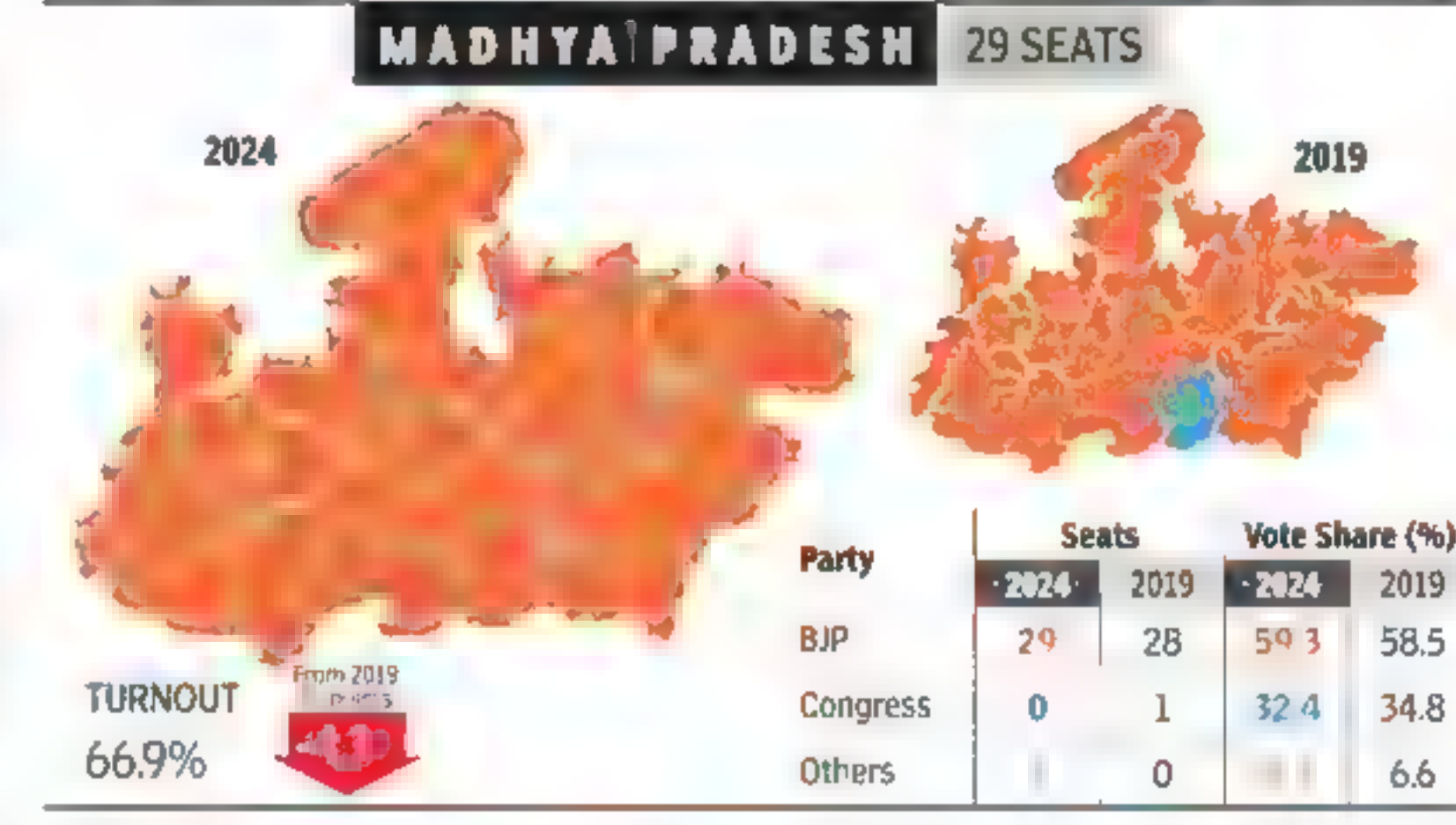
Bhopal: BJP may have suffered a bruising in UP, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, but the party has 29 reasons to celebrate in MP, the original saffron heartland.

BJP's slogan of "400 paar" had fizzled out by noon on Tuesday but in MP the call for 29-0 was ringing out loud and clear. Even Congress' last bastion, Chhindwara, fell to BJP more emphatically. The victory margins said it all — the least was nearly 52,500 (Morena) and the highest was a record 11.7 lakh (Indore).

Indore made another record — 2.18 lakh votes for NO TA. "No choice" turned out to be Indore's second choice, making up 14% of votes cast.

For CM Mohan Yadav propelled from the backbenches to the state's top post, the clean sweep comes as a morale booster. He will take all 29 newly elected party MPs to Delhi early Wednesday morning.

While BJP workers celebrated across MP, there was silence in Congress offices. Never before has Congress been reduced to zero in MP. Its second-rung leaders were routed in the Nov 2023 assembly elections, and now the top leadership has been decimated. Digvijaya Singh, who didn't want to contest the 2024 election, suffered his



second consecutive LS defeat — Bhopal in 2019 and Rajgarh in 2024. Nakul Nath lost Chhindwara, placing the Nath family political legacy at risk. Rumours in Feb of the Nath's possible switch to BJP — rumours that the father and son took their time denying — seem to have cost them dearly. Former Union minister and Congress' trib-

al face Kantilal Bhuria lost by over 2 lakh votes to BJP newcomer Anita Nagar Singh Chouhan.

"Thank you Chhindwara," CM Yadav tweeted.

Nath and Digvijaya Singh's Congress' Jai and Veeru — are not riding into a glorious sunset.

It was a different story for BJP's stalwarts. From Shivraj

Singh Chouhan to Jyotiraditya Scindia and VD Sharma, they won by massive margins.

Chouhan, who was denied a fifth term as CM, won by over 8.2 lakh votes, proving that "Mama" is still BJP's talisman leader in MP. After such an emphatic win, the BJP brass can no longer ignore him. But a Union ministry berth may not be enough for BJP's longest serving CM, who is a six-time MP and former state party chief.

Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has made a comeback in Guna, his family seat, which he had lost to a former aide, KP Yadav, in 2019. BJP denied a ticket to Yadav and Scindia won by over 5.4 lakh votes, the highest ever on this seat. With this victory, he has strengthened his clout in the party he joined four years ago.

For Congress, it's a soul-shattering defeat. Its new state chief, Jitu Patwari, will be walking the razor's edge. MP sticks out as a sore thumb on a day Congress was celebrating elsewhere.

Guaranteed win? BJP scores 5th straight victory

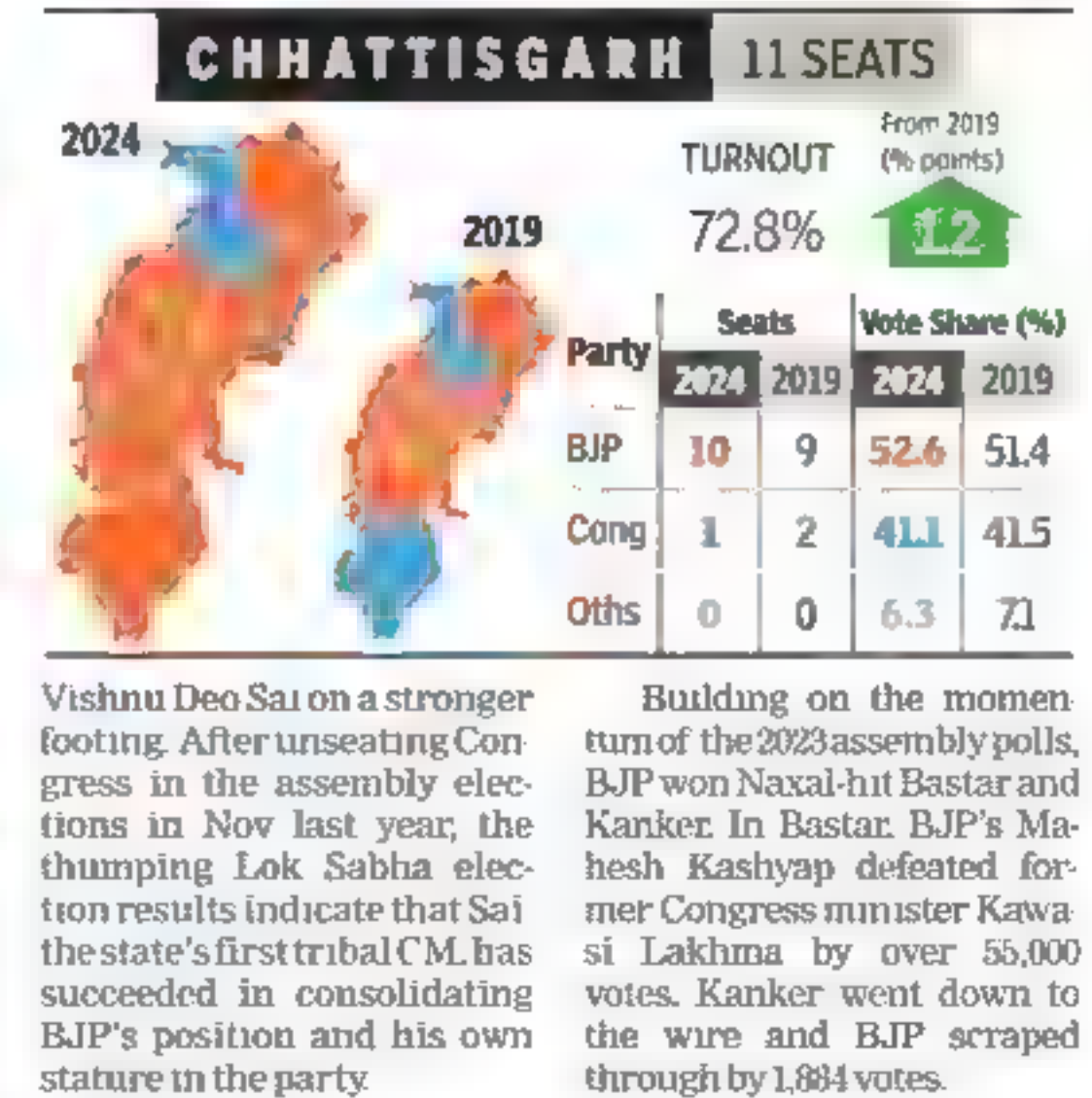
TEAM TOI

Raipur: Chhattisgarh has never disappointed BJP in Lok Sabha elections. It stood by it yet again on Saturday when the saffron camp was looking for numbers.

While neighbouring MP handed over all 29 seats to BJP, the saffron camp looked headed for victory in 10 of the 11 seats in Chhattisgarh at 9pm, Korba being the lone Congress victory.

BJP has always dominated in parliamentary polls in Chhattisgarh, winning 10 seats each in 2004, 2009 and 2014, and nine in 2019. Now it's back to 10.

Chhattisgarh is a healing win for BJP after setbacks in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, and also puts first-time chief minister



Vishnu Deo Sai on a stronger footing. After unseating Congress in the assembly elections in Nov last year, the thumping Lok Sabha election results indicate that Sai the state's first tribal CM has succeeded in consolidating BJP's position and his own stature in the party.

Building on the momentum of the 2023 assembly polls, BJP won Naxal-hit Bastar and Kanker. In Bastar, BJP's Mahesh Kashyap defeated former Congress minister Kashi Lakhma by over 55,000 votes. Kanker went down to the wire and BJP scraped through by 1,884 votes.

BJP's win in Bastar division is significant because it comes in the wake of the most sustained anti-Maoist offensive in two decades — 118 Maoists have been eliminated in just five months.

Former Congress CM Bhupesh Baghel, too, had to bite the dust in Rajnandgaon. He was trailing by over 44,400 votes against BJP sitting MP Santosh Pandey. On Monday, the eve of results, Baghel had alleged discrepancies in serial numbers of EVMs in Rajnandgaon, saying the numbers given by EC before voting didn't match with those on Form 17C.


In Raipur, minister Brijmohan Agrawal had an unsalable lead of over 5.2 lakh votes, and in Durg BJP sitting MP Vijay Baghel was leading his Congress rival by

4.2 lakh votes.

CM Sai thanked BJP workers for putting up a winning show. He admitted that NDA didn't meet expectations in some states but pointed out that it did exceptionally well in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. "Once again we are going to form govt under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said.

"Modi guarantee has resonated across the country. Beneficial schemes of the state and Centre have had a positive impact. Certainly, better results will be achieved in the future," he said.

State Congress president Deepak Baj acknowledged that the election results in Chhattisgarh did not meet their expectations but drew solace from INDIA bloc's strong show elsewhere.

TURNCOATS	DUMKA, JHARKHAND	CUTTACK, ODISHA	PATIALA, PUNJAB	BARRACKPUR, WB	RAJAMPET, ANDHRA	PATHANAMTHITTA, KERALA	LUDHIANA, PUNJAB
	Sita Soren From JMM to BJP LOST TO Nalin Soren JMM BY 22,527 VOTES	Bhartruhari Mahtab From BJD to BJP WON AGAINST Sanjiv Misra BJD BY 57,077 VOTES	Preneet Kaur From Cong to BJP LOST TO Dharamvira Gandhi Cong BY 16,618 VOTES	Arjun Singh From TMC to BJP LOST TO Partha Bhowmick TMC BY 64,438 VOTES	Kiran Reddy From Cong to BJP LOST TO PV Midhun Reddy YSRCP BY 76,071 VOTES	Anil Antony From Cong to BJP LOST TO Anto Antony Cong BY 1,33,217 VOTES	Ravneet Singh Bittu From Cong to BJP LOST TO AS Raja Warring Cong BY 20,942 VOTES

Didi's Double Delight: Weak Centre, Weaker State Oppn

TEAM TOI

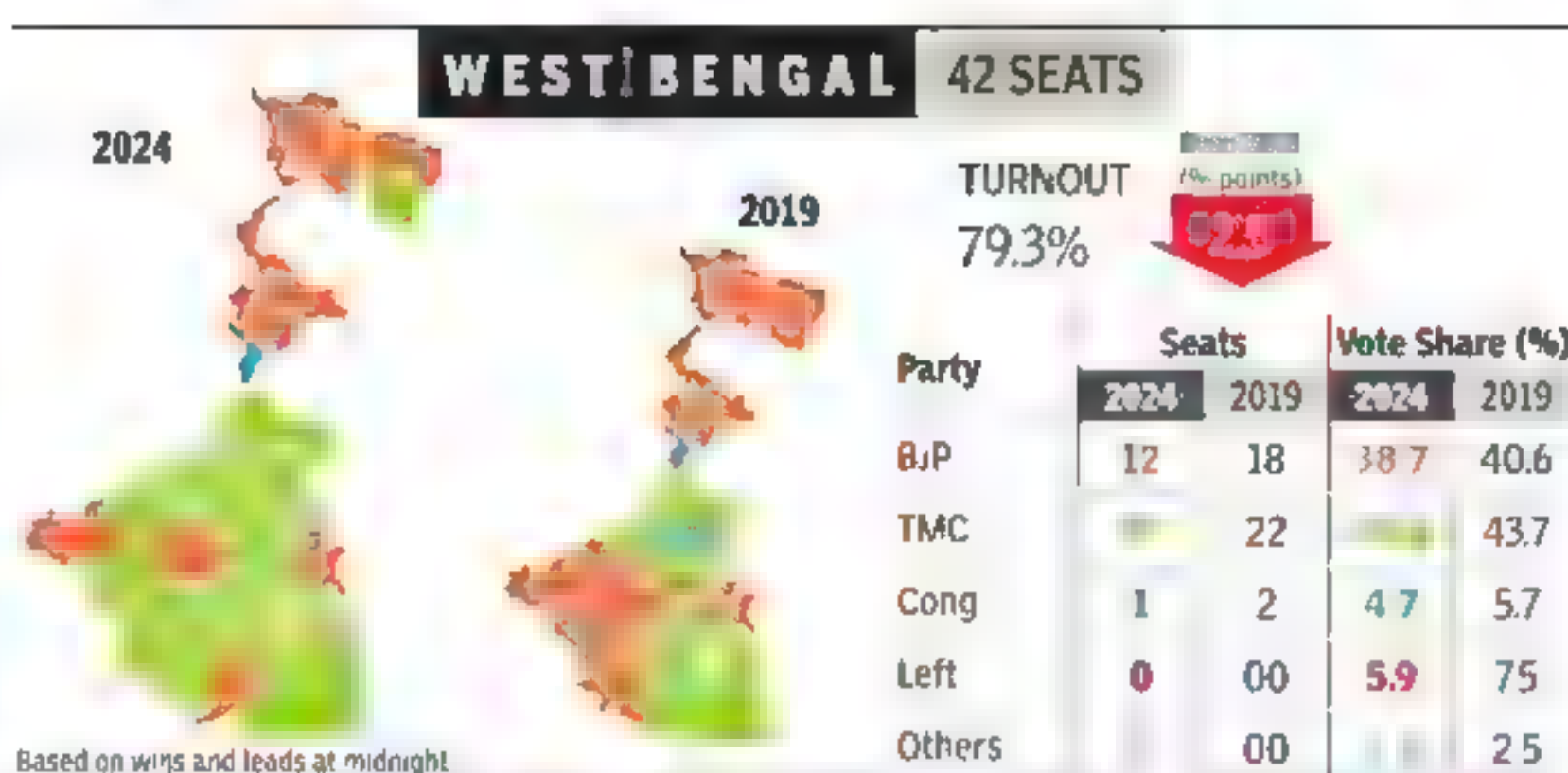
Kolkata: Bengal's voters gave BJP a feeble mandate in 2024 Lok Sabha elections, helping Trinamool Congress (TMC) contain the safe from party largely to its pockets of influence and giving CM Mamata Banerjee the double delight of a weakened Centre and a weaker opposition in the state.

BJP won or led in 12 of 42 seats in Bengal — down from its 2019 tally of 18. Trinamool increased its count from 22 to 29. Congress managed to retain one of its bastions in Malda (South) but, in one of the biggest upsets of this election, old warhorse Adhir Chowdhury lost his Behrampur seat for the first time since 1999 to Trinamool newbie and former Team India cricketer Yusuf Pathan. Left Front, which fought as part of INDIA bloc, repeated its 2019 no-show in Bengal.

Trinamool increased its vote share from 43.7% in 2019 to 55.7% while both BJP and Congress-LF combined saw theirs sliding. BJP slid from 40.6% to 38.7% and the combined Congress-LF vote share slipped from 13.2% to 10.3% this time.

BJP won Contai and Tamaluk in East Midnapore, the home district of its state poll mascot, Suvenud Adhikari, by not-so-impressive margins, but saw two of its three Union ministers lose.

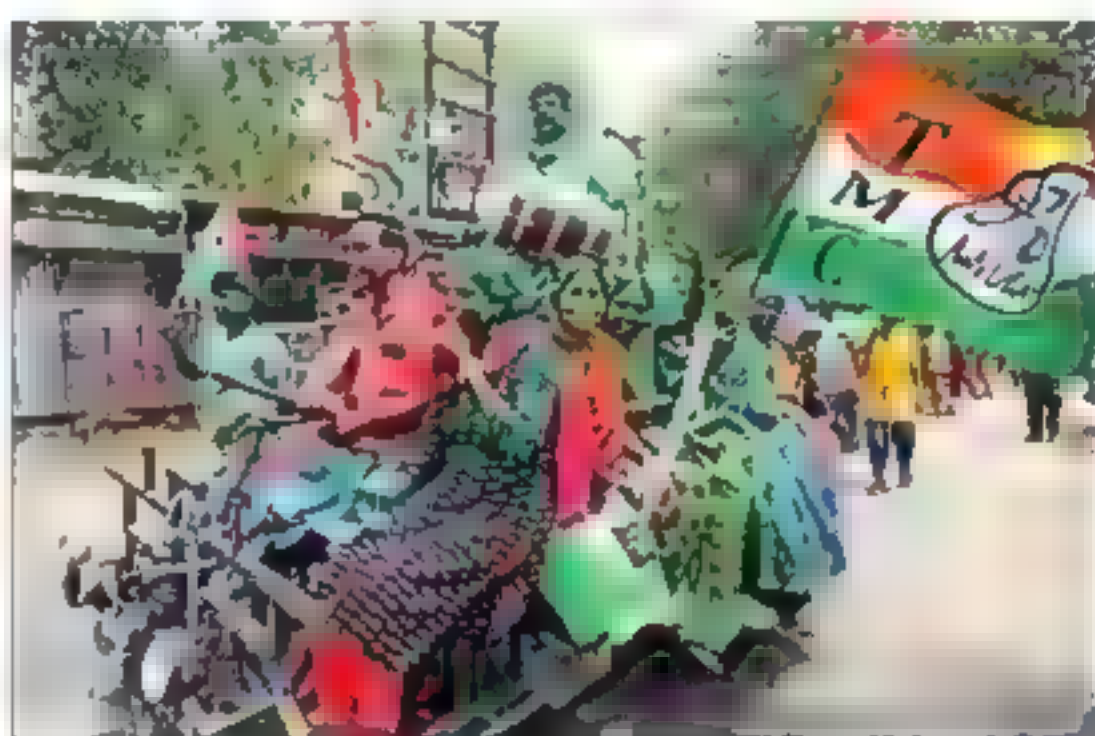
Subhas Sarkar in Bankura and Nisith Pramanik in Coochbehar. The third junior Union minister, Shantanu Thakur, won in Bongaon.



Former state BJP chief Dilip Ghosh, too, lost in Burdwan Durgapur, where he was shifted just before the election season from his old seat of Midnapore. The party, in the bargain, also lost Midnapore BJP lost Barrackpore as well, where it fielded Arjun Singh. Voter confusion over his multiple flip-flops and which party he was representing this time may have played a part.

North Bengal and a few isolated pockets like Purulia, Bishnupur and Ranaghat gave BJP some comfort but everywhere, the margin seemed to be coming down substantially.

Trinamool ticked all the boxes in this election. A large part of its impressive showing came from the support of women voters, who benefited from welfare schemes like Lakshmi Bhandar and Sabuj Sathi. Voters benefiting from Swasthya Sathi played a role, too. BJP failed in almost all its



poll pitches. The Sandeshkhali narrative that it built during the start of the campaign seemed to have come apart after the release of sting videos, which showed local BJP functionaries admitting that women were coached to file rape complaints. BJP lost Basirhat and more significantly, trailed in Sandeshkhali assembly segment.

Trinamool also thwarted BJP's CAA-NRC pitch, saw

ing apprehension and confusion among voters over how things would play out after they applied for Indian citizenship under CAA. BJP retained both Ranaghat and Bongaon, where Matuas are a substantial chunk — but appeared to be doing so with reduced margins.

BJP's last-ditch attempt to play the "appeasement" card against Trinamool failed to make any significant impact.

TDP, JD(U) won't break INDIA: Didi

The LS poll results showed PM Modi had lost all credibility, and both he and Union home minister Amit Shah, should "resign on moral grounds", Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee said on Tuesday. Extending support to INDIA bloc, she said she would "certainly help" in its bid to form govt. Mamata, however, said she would skip the INDIA bloc meeting on Wednesday. She mocked BJP, saying the party now has to "beg" TDP and JD(U) to form govt. "I know them (Chandrababu Naidu and Nitish Kumar) very well. They won't break India," Mamata said. **TNN**

The Bengal campaign of PM Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah started with a focus on development and "Modi ki guarantee", but changed tracks midway with an increased glare on Trinamool's "appeasement" politics. This preempted any chances of a large-scale split of Muslim votes between Trinamool and Congress-LF combine. Trinamool would have gained from the resultant Muslim vote consolidation, but there was no substantial Hindu vote consolidation to help BJP.

Trinamool successfully countered the last weapon in BJP's arsenal — "corruption" in the state administration with an amplified message to voters that Centre was playing political vendetta in denying the state its share of funds.

Written off, Nitish surprises all and equals BJP's dozen

TEAM TOI

Patna: Bihar CM Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) and BJP registered victories in 12 seats each as NDA won 30 of 40 Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar, while the opposition INDIA bloc had to be content with nine and an independent won one to wrap up the count on Tuesday.

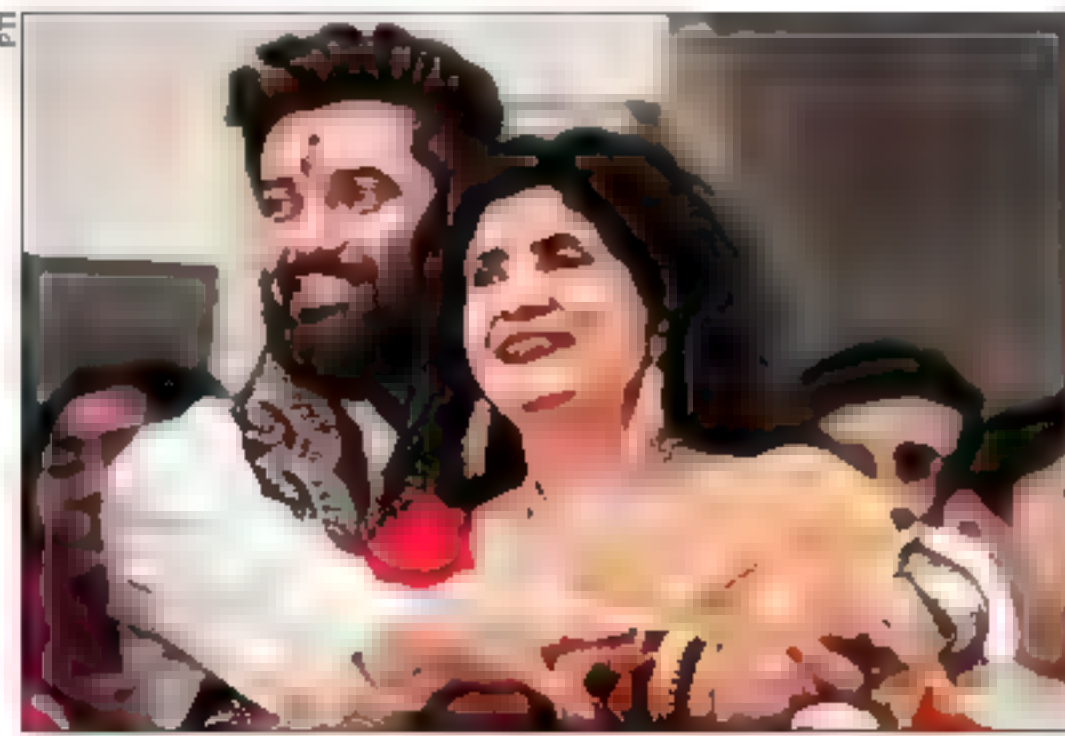
Among the other NDA partners, Chirag Paswan-led LJP (RV) took five, winning all the seats it contested, while former CM Jitan Ram Manjhi-led HAMS secured victory in one.

NDA lost nine seats compared to 2019, when the alliance steamrolled the opposition to win 39 seats, with Congress winning only Kishanganj. However, BJP had been relatively consistent in the state. The party had won 22 seats in 2014 and all the 17 it contested in 2019.

Among INDIA bloc allies, RJD won four seats, Congress three and CPI ML (Liberal) two, while Pappu Yadav won in Purnea as an independent. The opposition alliance gained eight seats. This year, Congress added Katihar and Sasaram to its kitty, while retaining Kishanganj.

Union ministers Giriraj Singh and Nityanand Rai retained Begusarai and Ujiyarpur seats, respectively, but their central colleague and power minister RK Singh lost his traditional Ara seat to CPI ML (Liberal)'s Sudama Prasad by around 60,000 votes.

Former CM Manjhi, who heads Hindustani Awam Morcha Secular, succeeded in making his parliamentary debut at the age of 79, registering victory from the reserved seat of Gava. However, NDA partner Uppendra Kushwaha, a former Union minister who heads Rashtriya Lok Morcha, faced a humili-



SONRISE: Chirag (seen here with his mother) proved with his party's decisive victory that he is the 'real' political heir of Ram Vilas Paswan

Chirag registers 100% strike rate

After over three years of struggle, LJP (Ram Vilas) president Chirag Paswan through his decisive victory has finally proved he is the "real" political heir of his father Ram Vilas Paswan, who died in Oct 2020. By winning all the five LS seats his party was allotted in the NDA alliance, Chirag has not only maintained LJP's previous track record of keeping 100% strike rate but also established that he is the new Dalit icon on the political landscape of Bihar. In 2019 polls, LJP under Ram Vilas had won all the six seats that were allotted to the party under the seat-sharing pact. Everyone was surprised when BJP allotted five seats to Chirag's party while sparing none to his rival faction Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party, headed by his uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras. **TNN**

Rudy's third win against Lalu kin

Former Union minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy scored a hat-trick for BJP in Saran by defeating Lok Prasad's daughter Rohini Acharya by over 13,000 votes, each time getting the better of a member of RJD chief's extended family. Neither Rohini — popularly as "kidney girl" for having donated one of her kidneys to her ailing father around two years ago — nor anyone in her circles had anticipated that her poll debut would turn out to be baptism by fire. In 2014, Rudy had defeated Lalu's wife and former Bihar CM Rabri Devi by 41,000 votes. Five years later, Rudy widened the gap, beating former state minister and RJD nominee Chandrika Rai by nearly 1.4 lakh votes. Rai is the father-in-law of Lalu's eldest son and ex-minister Tej Pratap Yadav. Lalu had defeated Rudy in 2004 and 2009. **TNN**

milating defeat in Karakat. LJP (RV) candidate Shambhavi, 25, won by a margin of more than 1.87 lakh votes. During his campaign in Bihar, Modi hailed Shambhavi as the "youngest candidate" in this year's LS polls. At least four sitting MLAs

Manjhi (Imamganj), Surendra Yadav (Belaganj), Sudama Prasad (Taraori) and Sudhakar Singh (Ramgarh, Kaimur) — as well as one sitting RS member Misa Bharti has won. This will lead to bypolls to four assembly seats and one RS seat.

Manipur & 3 N-E states dump NDA

TEAM TOI

Guwahati: NDA experienced setbacks in the North-east, losing three seats from its 2019 LS tally while Congress saw a resurgence in the region once considered its bastion. Of the seven LS seats Congress won in the region, Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra had traversed through six.

NDA's biggest dent was in trouble-torn Manipur, where Congress defeated BJP in Meitei-dominated Inner Manipur and its ally NPP in the tribal majority outer Manipur.

In Mizoram, ZPM wrested the lone seat. In Nagaland, Con

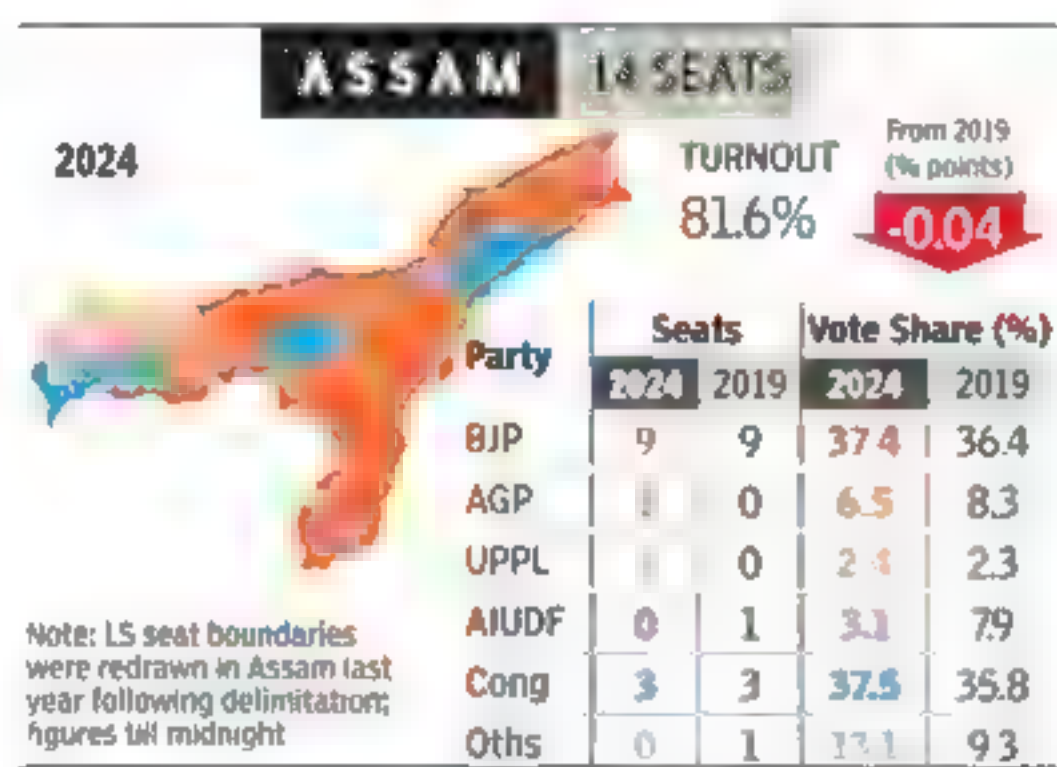
Himanta doffs hat to Cong hero Rakibul

TEAM TOI

Guwahati: NDA secured victory in 11 of Assam's 14 Lok Sabha seats increasing its tally of 2019 by two, leaving the remaining three for Congress. The election results Tuesday sprang two significant surprises — the exit of AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal and the return of regional ally party and NDA partner AGP to LS after 10 years.

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said that no party governing Assam had ever won these many Lok Sabha seats in the state. "Not even (former CM) Tarun Gogoi could achieve this feat," he said.

According to the CM, the biggest victory in the state belonged to Rakibul Hussain of

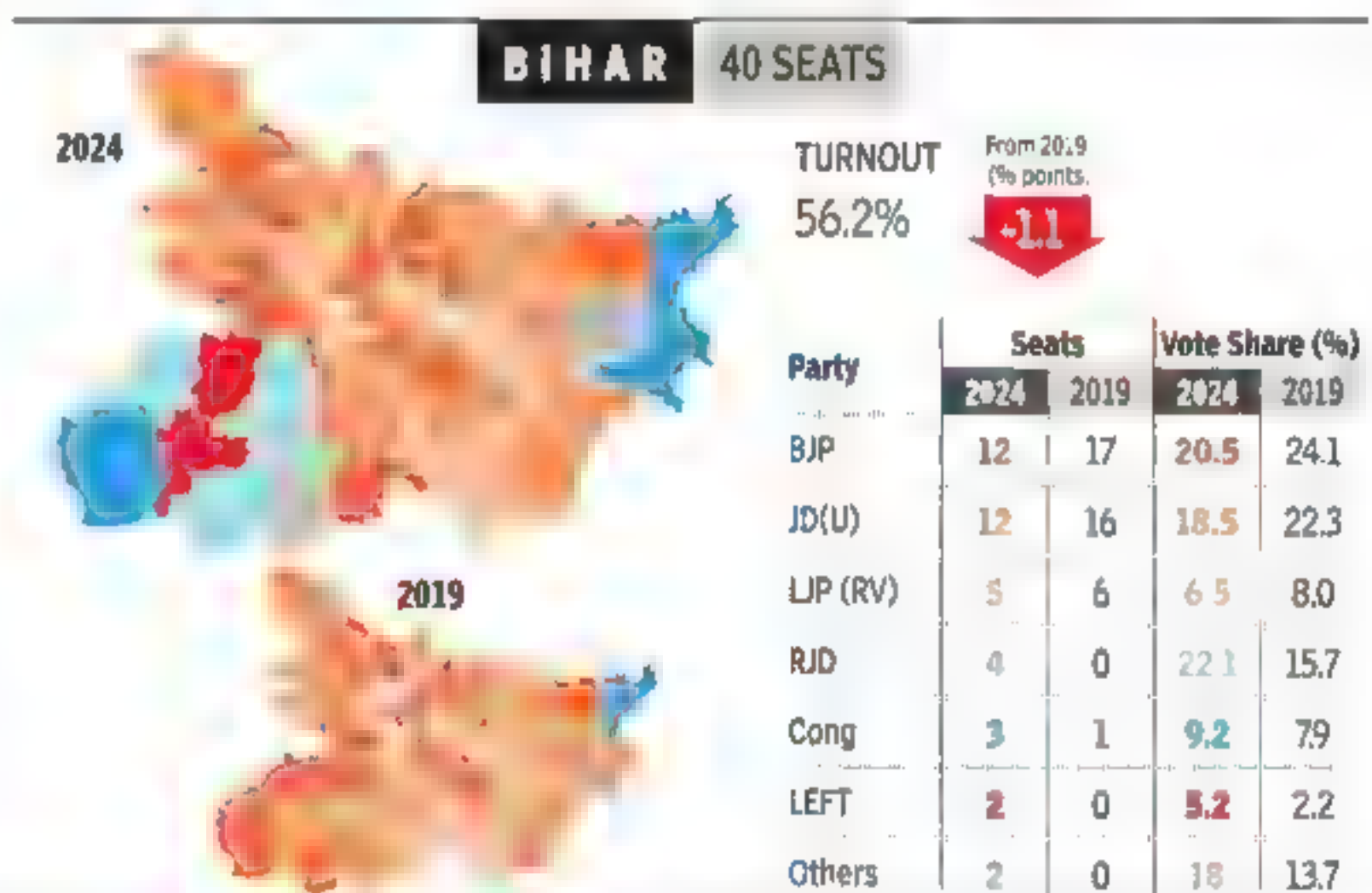


Congress, who defeated Ajmal in Dhubri by 1,01,476 votes. "He has finished with the highest winning margin in the country and so he is the hero of the day," Sarma said.

BJP's tally, however, remained stagnant at nine, the same number of seats it had won in 2019. Congress, too, failed to increase its tally of three from the last election.

Sarma said NDA's overall vote share in the state climbed to nearly 46%, a huge jump from the 39% we secured in 2019 Lok Sabha and 44% in 2021 assembly elections". He said: "This we have achieved despite the state having a 40% minority population."

BJP lost two of the 11 seats it had contested, Nagaon and Jorhat, both going to Congress. BJP's biggest defeat was in Jorhat where party MP Tapan Gogoi lost to Gaurav Gogoi, son of Tarun Gogoi. Gaurav shifted to Jorhat after his constituency, Kohbar, ceased to exist due to delimitation last year. "This is a victory for democracy and a blessing for young voters," Gaurav said.



NORTHEAST

States	BJP	BJP+	Oth
Arunachal Pradesh (2 seats)	2	2	
Meghalaya (2 seats)	2	1	1 VOTPP
Manipur (2 seats)	1	1 NPP	2 0 NPP
Tripura (2 seats)	2	2	
Nagaland (1 seat)	1	1	0 NDPP
Mizoram (1 seat)	1	1	1 ZPM 1 NMF
Sikkim (1 seat)	1	1	1 SKM 1 SKM

gress trumped NDPP BJP, winning the lone seat despite not having a single MLA. In Meghalaya, NDA partner NPP lost to Voice of the People Party in Shillong and to Congress in CM Conrad Sangma's home seat Tura, where his sister and sitting MP Agatha Sangma lost. Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma blamed leaders of a particular religion for NDA losses in Nagaland and Meghalaya.

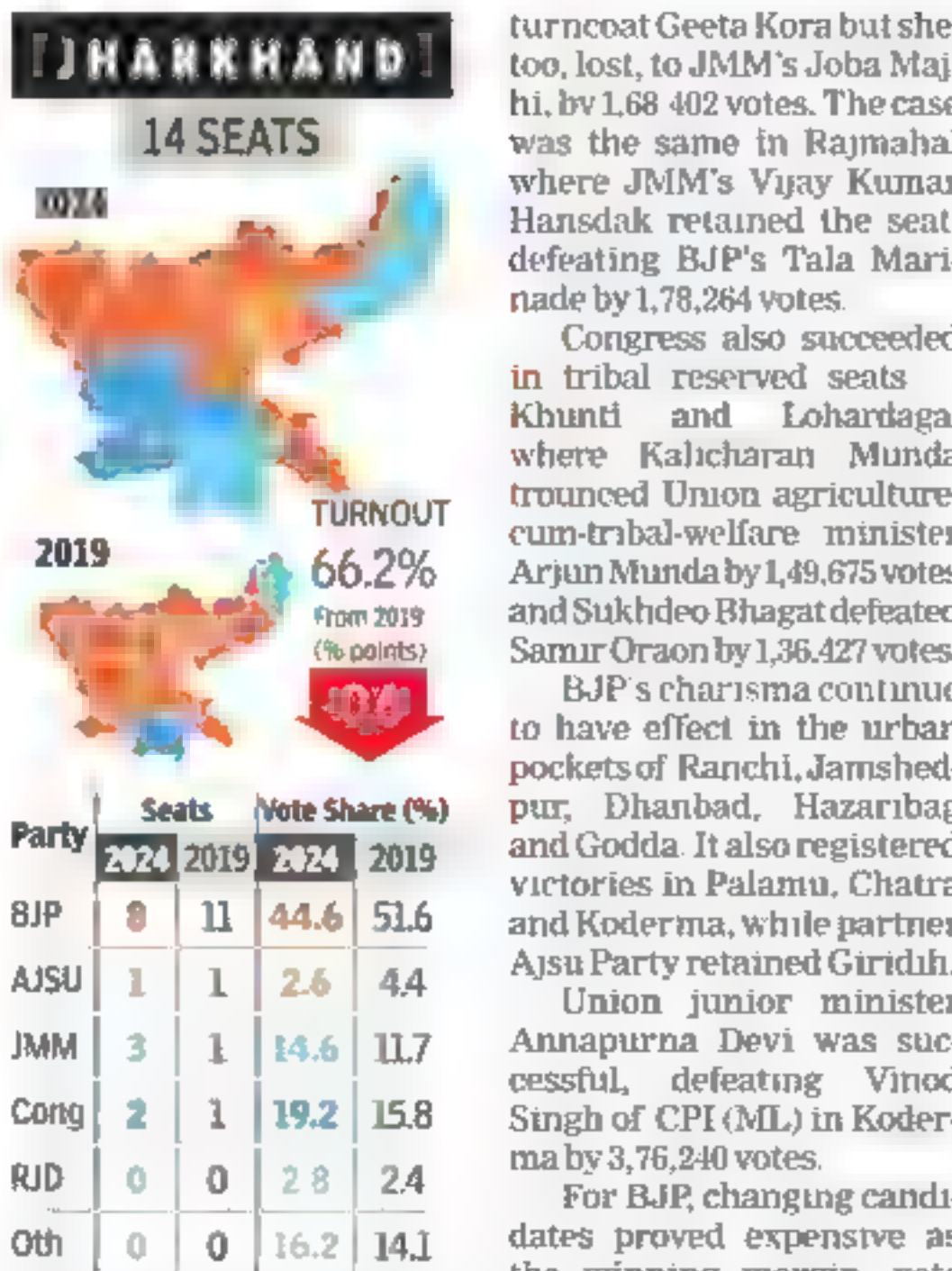
Nine not fine: Single digit for NDA, tribals back INDIA

TEAM TOI

Ranchi: The diminishing Modi magic was reflected in Jharkhand as the BJP led NDA managed nine Lok Sabha seats out of 14 in the state. BJP won eight and its ally partner, AJSU Party, retained its single seat.

The INDIA bloc, on the other hand, increased its tally to five from two in 2019. All the tribal reserved seats went to the INDIA bloc, with analysts saying the ED action against JMM working president and former CM Hemant Soren did not go down well with tribal voters. JMM won Dumka, Singhbhum and Rajmahal seats, it was successful in tapping tribal sentiment as the BJP-led govt at the Centre refused to include a separate Sarna Code in the census register.

The Sarna Code refers to a proposal for a separate religious code for tribal communities in India who follow Sarna, or nature worship. BJP had fielded Shibu Soren's elder daughter-in-law, Sita Soren, from Dumka, but she was defeated by



JMM's Nalin Soren by 22,527 votes. In Singhbhum, the safe from party fielded Congress

turncoat Geeta Kora but she, too, lost, to JMM's Joba Majhi, by 1,68,402 votes. The case was the same in Rajmahal where JMM's Vijay Kumar Hansdak retained the seat, defeating BJP's Tala Marinade by 1,78,264 votes.

Congress also succeeded in tribal reserved seats Khunti and Lohardaga, where Kalicharan Munda trounced Union agriculture-tribal-welfare minister Arjun Munda by 1,49,675 votes and Sukhdeo Bhagat defeated Samur Oraon by 1,36,427 votes.

BJP's charisma continue to have effect in the urban pockets of Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Dhanbad, Hazaribag and Godda. It also registered victories in Palamu, Chatra and Koderma, while partner AJSU Party retained Giridih. Union junior minister Annapurna Devi was successful, defeating Vinod Singh of CPI (ML) in Koderma by 3,76,240 votes.

For BJP, changing candidates proved expensive as the winning margin, vote share and number of seats dropped in comparison to the previous election.

In stunning blow, BJD draws a blank. BJP takes 20, Cong bags the other

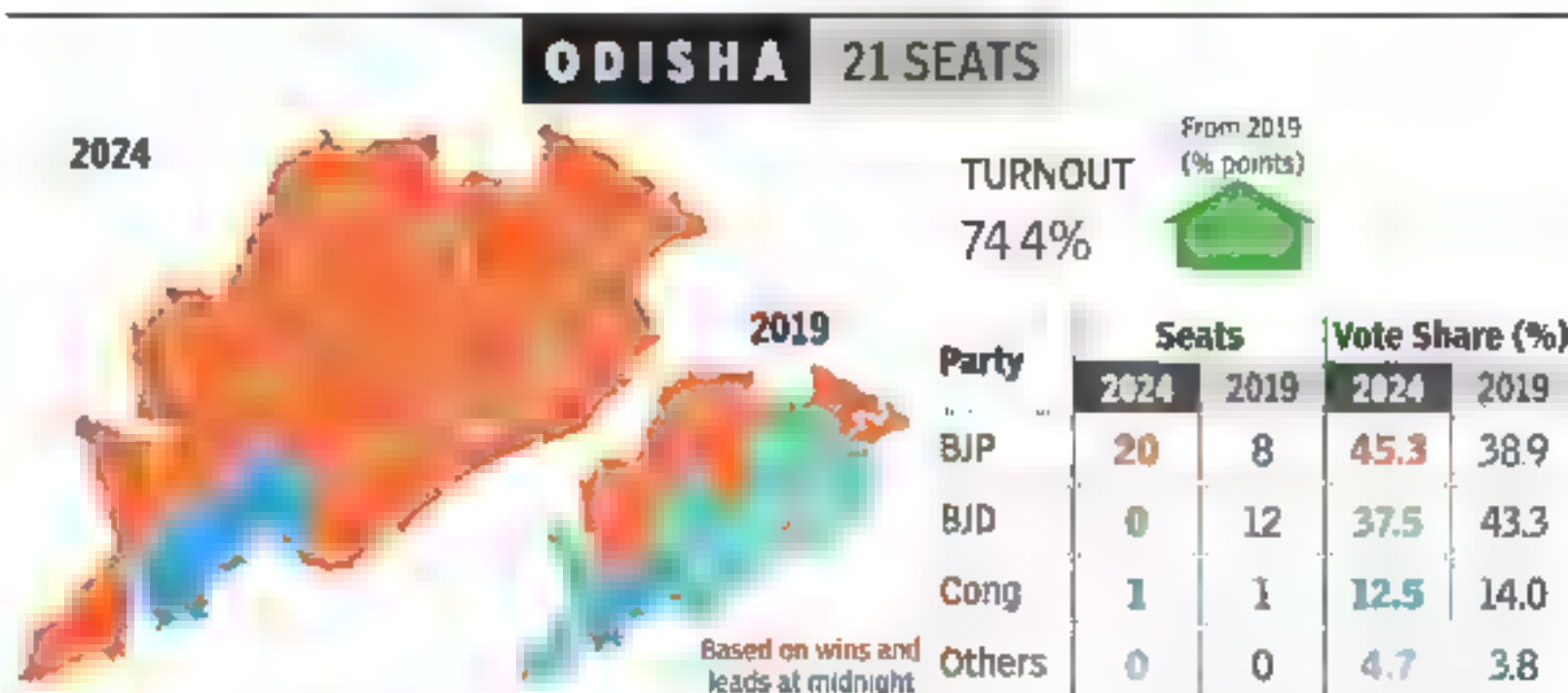
TEAM TOI

Bhubaneswar: BJP scored a resounding victory in elections in Odisha, surfing a pro Modi wave in the state to an unprecedented 20 out of 21 seats. Congress retained Koraput, the only seat that didn't go BJP's way.

Not a single BJD candidate won a Lok Sabha seat. In 2019, BJD had won 12 seats and BJP eight. Highlighting the "good work" of the Modi govt, BJD had sought votes for a "double-engine govt" in the simultaneous Odisha assembly and LS polls.

The strategic importance of winning Odisha in PM Modi's political calculus was evident from his victory speech in Delhi. After exclaiming "Bharat Mata Ki Jai", he followed up with "Jai Jagannath", highlighting the significance of Odisha in the party's plans. "It will be for the first time that there will be a BJP CM in the land of Mahaprabhu Lord Jagannath," he said.

Behind BJP's success lay its effective campaign strategy that emphasised the im-



portance of voting for Modi. The PM had argued in rallies that votes for BJD would go waste due to its lack of national relevance. BJP also banked on Naveen's "falling health", "outsourced govt" and anti-incumbency.

"Thank You Odisha... BJP will leave no stone unturned in fulfilling the dreams of the people and taking Odisha to new heights of progress," Modi said in a post on X.

Analysts said BJD seemed to have lost its independent identity because of its blind support to the Modi dispensation on every initiative.

BJP's success extended to chief minister Naveen Patnaik's home district of Ganjam, where the party won both Aska and Berhampur seats. Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan was leading over BJD's Pranab Prakash Das in Sambalpur by over one lakh votes. Former Union minister Juar Oraon was leading former Indian Hockey captain Dilip Tirkey by a similar margin from Sundargarh. In Balasore, former Union minister Pratap Sarangi secured his seat, defeating BJD's Lekhasri Samantasinghar, who had recently defected from BJP, by

more than one lakh votes. Kendrapara, known as the "karmabhoomi" of the late Biju Patnaik, also fell to BJP's kitty, with Baijayant Panda defeating BJD's Anshuman Mohanty Pradeep Panigrahy, a former BJD MLA who was expelled from the party, emerged victorious in Berhampur by over 1.6 lakh votes. In another notable contest, BJD veteran Bhartruhari Mahatab, who had joined BJP, defeated Sanjiv Misra, a former top executive of the Aditya Birla Group and a political debutant from BJD.

Hi Dr Flop!

CELEBS IN FRAY

MANDI, HIMACHAL

Kangana Ranaut

BJP

WON AGAINST

Vikramaditya Singh

Cong

BY 74,755 VOTES

MEERUT, UP

Arun Govil

BJP

WON AGAINST

Sunita Verma

SP

BY 10,585 VOTES

MATHURA, UP

Hema Malini

BJP

WON AGAINST

Mukesh Dhangar

Cong

BY 2,93,407 VOTES

GORAKHPUR, UP

Ravi Kishan

BJP

WON AGAINST

Kajal Nishad

SP

BY 1,03,526 VOTES

ASANSOL, WB

Shatrughan Sinha

TMC

WON AGAINST

SS Ahluwalia

BJP

BY 59,564 VOTES

THRISSUR, KERALA

Suresh Gopi

BJP

WON AGAINST

VS Sunilkumar

CPI

BY 74,686 VOTES

BAHARAMPUR, WB

Yusuf Pathan

TMC

WON AGAINST

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

Cong

BY 85,022 VOTES

Maha Jolt To NDA, Big Boost For INDIA Bloc

TEAM TOI

Mumbai: In the 2019 polls, Maharashtra, which sends the second highest number of MPs to the Lok Sabha in the country, played a key role in PM Modi's victory with the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance winning 41 of the state's 48 seats. But in Verdict 2024, the state has delivered a major blow to the NDA. The opposition led Maha Vikas Aghadi dominated the state with leads or victories in 30 seats, leaving the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance trailing far behind with leads or wins in just 17 seats. Vishal Patil, the Congress rebel who won from Sangli as an independent, is also expected to add to MVA's numbers.

This is the outcome despite the BJP-triggered split of two regional parties—Shiv Sena and NCP—with the aim of fracturing the opposition and raising its own numbers. Instead, this consolidated the opposition vote, with Congress being the biggest beneficiary. Congress replaced BJP as the single largest party in the state with leads or victories in 13 seats. This was a dramatic turnaround from its historic low of winning just one seat in 2019.

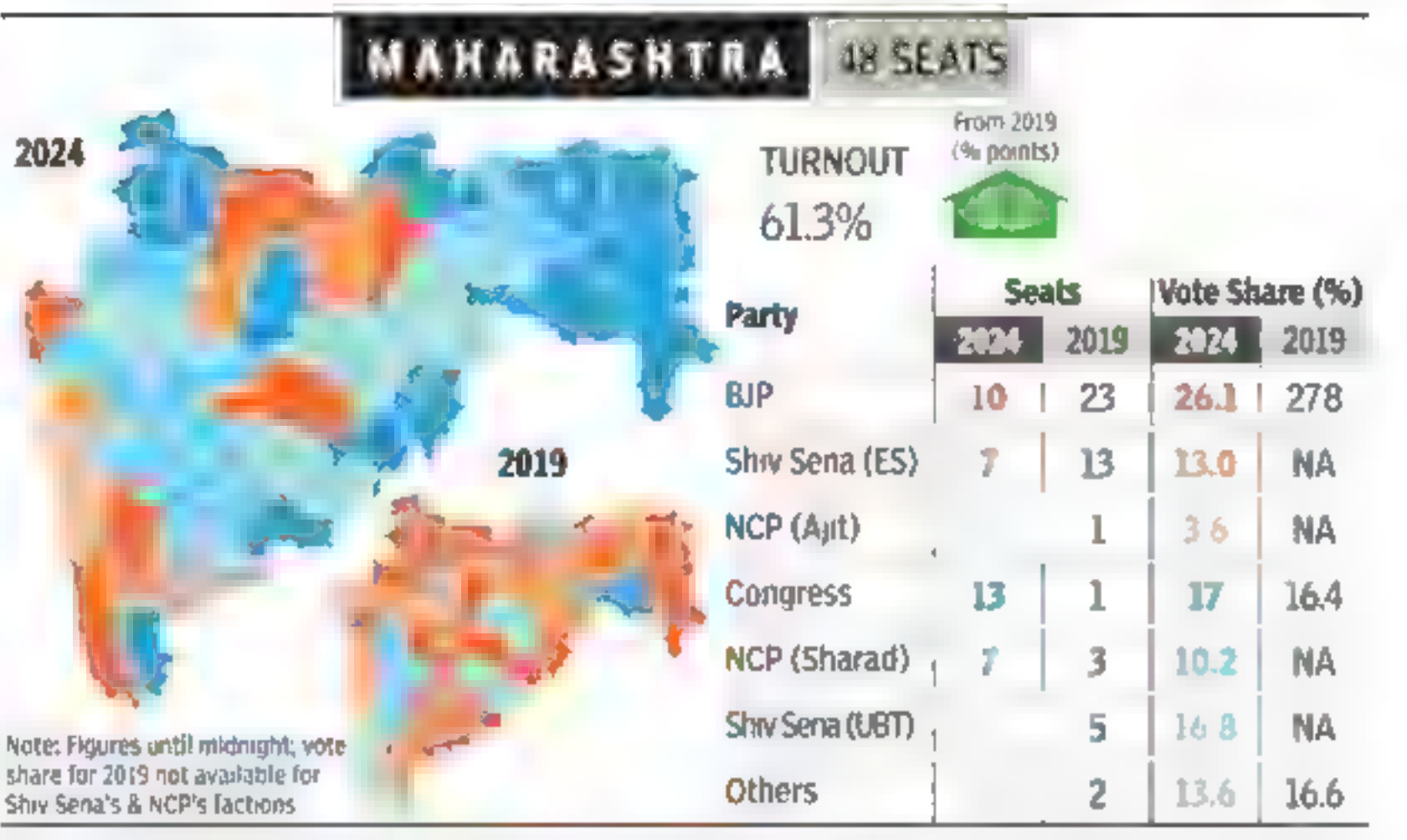
Responding to the results,

Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said the INDIA bloc should stake claim to form the govt at the Centre. "We will be meeting tomorrow (Wednesday) to discuss this. It's not as if BJP has not harassed Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu who are currently with NDA."

Within Mahayuti, BJP's tally plunged from 23 seats in 2019 to leads or wins in just 9 seats. Shinde's Sena led or won in 7 seats and Ajit Pawar's NCP had to settle for a single seat. Union ministers including Raosaheb Danve (Jalna) and Bharti Pawar (Dindori) were routed and state minister Sudhir Mangankar lost from Chandrapur.

Within the MVA, Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) bagged or led in 9 seats and NCP (SP) led in or won 8 seats. Both parties won more seats than the parties that split from them. In Baramati, the most keenly watched contest in the state, Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule defeated Ajit Pawar's wife, Sunetra Pawar.

Observers said it's clear that Mahayuti's strategy of relying on PM Modi's appeal did not deliver results. On the contrary, 'Operation Lotus' boomeranged and generated



sympathy for Thackeray and Sharad Pawar. Indeed, allying with Ajit Pawar who BJP had strongly targeted during the irrigation scam may have upset the party's core voters. Also, Modi's statements about appeasement of Muslims during his Lok Sabha poll campaign, his reference to Sharad Pawar as "bhatakti aatma (wandering soul)" and Shiv Sena (UBT) as "nakli Sena" seem to have backfired. Price rise, unemployment, agrarian distress and the opposition's message

that the Constitution would be changed to scrap the SC quota if Modi came back to office were among the macro factors that impacted the results. The Maratha agitation similarly cost the Mahayuti, especially in its epicentre, Marathwada. Experts said the consolidation of Muslim and Dalit votes helped the MVA. "The youth face unemployment, farmers are upset with Centre's policies and these sections went against Mahayuti Muslims and Dalits consoli-

dated in favour of the MVA," said an NCP functionary. The Lok Sabha results will have implications for the state assembly polls which are six months away. How did the two Senas perform? The Shiv Sena UBT led in 9 seats, just two more than Shinde's Shiv Sena. However, it had also contested 21 seats compared to Shinde's 15. Thackeray's strike rate for victory was 43% compared to Shinde's 47%. But Thackeray dominated in Mumbai, winning two seats compared to

In family bastion Baramati, Pawar's daughter trumps his nephew's wife

Ajit Pawar defeated a Pawar to retain Baramati Lok Sabha seat, reaffirming Sharad Pawar's enduring influence over the family stronghold, and damaging the morale of Ajit Pawar's NCP. Senior Pawar's deep personal connection with the electorate and the ability of her daughter, NCP (SCP)'s Supriya Sule, to leverage his legacy proved decisive in securing her victory against her sister-in-law and Ajit's wife, Sunetra Pawar, by over 1.5 lakh votes. Supriya, three-time MP from Baramati, had to fight off a strong challenge mounted by the might of a combined BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP as she took on Sunetra. In her campaign speeches, she ensured to hammer home the point that she was battling "forces from Delhi", and the electoral battle was not just another fight in the family. Her grassroots campaign, the emotional resonance of her appeals to Maharashtra pride against "Delhi's forces", and her strategic use of a new party symbol, the Tutar, in her slogan "Ram Krishna Hari, Vajava Tutar" helped her romp home to victory. Much before the poll, Sharad started paving the way for Sule's victory. He met many old rivals in the run-up to polls, soliciting their support.

one claimed by Shinde in the three contests between the parties in the city. However, in the Thane region, Shinde's party wrested both the seats it contested against Sena (UBT). In the Konkan belt which has been a stronghold of the Thackeray family, Sena (UBT) lost both seats. Ratna guri-Sindhudurg was claimed by Uddhav Thackeray's bete-noire, former CM Narayan Rane. This is the first time BJP has won a seat in the Konkan region. Within the NCP factions,

Sharad Pawar's party dominated with leads in 8 seats and a victory in its citadel, Baramati. Ajit Pawar had to console himself with a single victory in Raigad for sitting MP Sunil Tatkare. Pawar Sr had contested 10 seats and had a strike rate of 80%. Ajit Pawar's party contested 4 seats and had a strike rate of 25%. Congress contested 17 seats and led in 13, leading to a strike rate of 76%. "MVA allies worked together and supported each other; down to booth level. This is what

worked for us," said Congress's Prithviraj Chavan.

Meanwhile, BJP which won 9 of 28 seats contested, had a strike rate of 32%. It suffered a major setback in the Vidarbha region from where deputy CM Devendra Fadnis hailed, as its tally fell from 5 seats in 2019 to just 2.

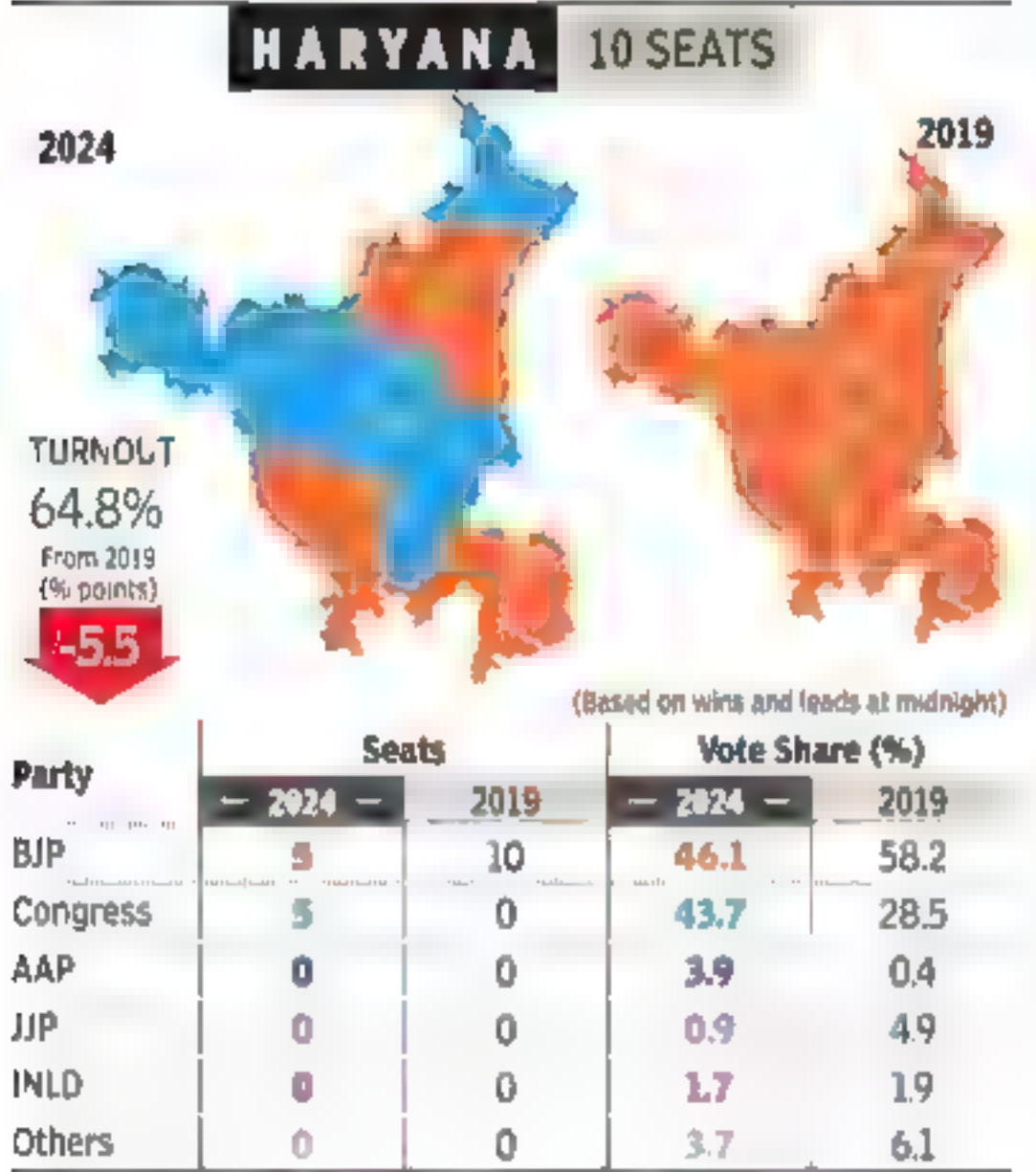
The party did not win a single seat in Marathwada, the heart of the Maratha quota agitation, which has also been impacted by a fierce drought.

BJP's numbers also declined in its bastion North Maharashtra where the Centre's export quota ban on onions, the main crop in the region, became a poll issue. Its seats here fell from 3 to 1. BJP's tally also fell from 4 to 1 in Western Maharashtra and 3 to 1 in Mumbai.

Responding to the verdict, Thackeray said, "This is a victory of democracy. The PM should have held more rallies. The BJP lost in locations where he campaigned."

Fadnis tweeted, "The unfortunate outcome of the results is that the opposition attempted to win the seats through its propaganda that we would change the Constitution. But in elections, the people's mandate has to be accepted as it is."

Congress to the fore as BJP loses seats, vote share



TEAM TOI

Chandigarh: The "Modi wave" that helped BJP sweep Haryana's 10 seats with unprecedented margins in 2019 failed to cut much ice with the electorate this time as the ruling party could manage to retain only five seats, that too with massively reduced margins. Congress has made a strong comeback with the gain of five seats. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which was contesting only in Kurukshetra, lost in a close fight.

The results indicate that the farmers' issue, unemployment, the Agnipath scheme, and the old pension scheme (OPS) had an impact on voters this time. Besides, there was strong anti-incumbency against the state BJP government, especially against former CM Manohar Lal Khattar.

In Karnal, Khattar won by a margin of over 2.3 lakh votes, whereas the seat was secured in 2019 by BJP MP Sanjay Bhatia with a margin of more than 6.5 lakh votes.

Although the party replaced Khattar with Kurukshetra MP Nayab Singh Saini just before the announcement of the Lok Sabha polls to beat the strong anti-incumbency current, Khattar led the party in the parliamentary polls, with both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah promising to accommodate him at the Centre.

The fact that BJP could not perform on expected lines even though Modi, Amit

Shah and UP CM Yogi Adityanath had campaigned in Haryana is a big worry for the saffron party.

The results are not a positive sign for BJP with state assembly polls slated for Oct this year. The victory of Congress candidates has indicated that Bhupinder Singh Hooda is the party's only crowd puller in the state. Most of the Congress tickets in Haryana were given on his advice.

Hooda's surprise pick, Satpal Brahanchari, from Haridwar, also surprised everyone by registering victory in the Sonapat seat. His surprise pick from Gurgaon, Raj Babbar, lost to BJP's Rajinderjit Singh but gave a tough fight to the Union minister.

All candidates of Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), which was once the state's main opposition party and its splinter group, Dushyant Chautala-led JJP, which was a partner in power with BJP for the past four-and-a-half years, lost their deposits on all seats.

Prominent leaders who won in Haryana are Kumari Seja (Congress) from Sirsa, Hooda (Congress) from Rohtak, Khattar (BJP) from Karnal, and both Union ministers—Rao Indrajit Singh and Krishan Pal from Gurgaon and Faridabad, respectively. Those who lost include former deputy PM Devi Lal's son Ranjit Singh Chautala (BJP), former Union minister Rattan Lal Kataria's widow Bansu Kataria (BJP), former RS MP Sushil Gupta (AAP), Congress MLA Rao Dan Singh, and BJP MLA Mohan Lal Badoli.

Banaskantha trips BJP's hat-trick of clean sweeps

TEAM TOI

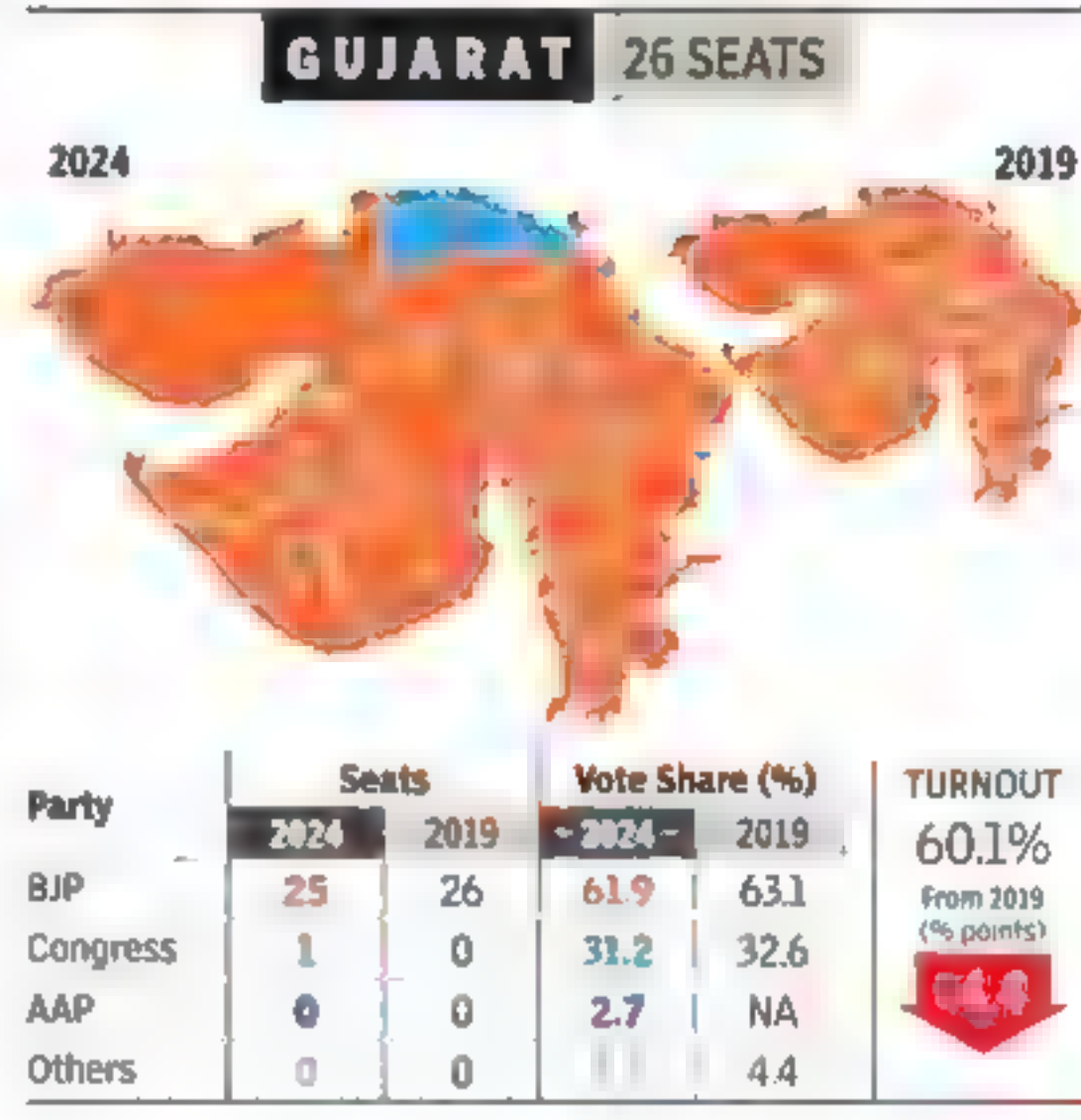
Gandhinagar: Amid electoral setbacks across the country, Gujarat did not fail its son-of-the-soil Narendra Modi as BJP won 25 out of 26 LS seats in the state. However, Gujarat was not totally immune to the resurgence of the opposition as Congress's Geniben Thakor wrested the Banaskantha seat from BJP after a decade. This singular loss robbed BJP of a hat-trick of clean sweeps in Gujarat.

BJP had pocketed the Surat seat even before votes were counted, with party candidate Mukesh Dalal being declared an uncontested winner during the filing of nominations.

Riding on PM Modi's guarantees, BJP garnered a vote share of 62.5%, marginally up

from 62.2% vote share in the 2019 general election. Congress's vote share stood at 31.5% in 23 LS constituencies in 2024 against 32.1% in 2019, when it fielded candidates on all 26 seats. AAP pocketed a 31.6% vote share on the two seats it contested as part of the INDIA bloc. Polling did not take place on the Surat LS seat.

Stalwarts of the saffron party put up a stellar performance, smashing electoral records on their way to emphatic wins. Union home minister Amit Shah stamped his dominion on the prestigious Gandhinagar seat, defeating Sonal Patel of Congress by a margin of 7.4 lakh votes, bettering his 5.6 lakh victory margin of 2019. Shah's victory margin was the second highest of the 2024 general election in Gujarat.



State BJP president C R Paatl broke his own record, winning the Navsari seat by 7.7 lakh votes, trouncing Naishad Desai of Congress. This was the highest winning margin in Gujarat and likely the fourth highest in the 2024 general election across India.

Union ministers Manu Mandaviya and Parshottam Rupala won from the Porbandar and Rajkot seats, respectively. The Kshatriya agitation against Rupala's anti-royal utterances failed to assert any bearing on the poll outcome as he defeated Congress's Pooresh Dhanani by an impressive margin of 4.5 lakh votes. Mandaviya won the Porbandar seat with a margin of 3.8 lakh votes.

In four seats, BJP candidates posted impressive wins with more than 5 lakh mar-

gins. On 10 seats, however, BJP's victory margins dwined in 2024 compared to the 2019 general election. Geni Thakor won with the lowest margin of 30,406 votes in a nail-biting finish.

Congress's INDIA bloc partner AAP failed to record a win as both its candidates—sitting MLAs Chaitar Vasava and Umesh Makwana—suffered comprehensive defeats at the hands of their BJP rivals. AAP's Bharuch candidate Vasava lost to BJP's tribal veteran Mansukh Vasava by 85,686 votes amid resentment by family members of late Congress stalwart Ahmed Patel. They were vociferous against AAP being given Patel's home seat. In the Bhavnagar seat, AAP's Makwana lost to BJP's Nunu MBhambhaniya by 4.6 lakh votes.

Panthic politics back with Amritpal, Beant's son

TEAM TOI

Chandigarh: The intense multi-cornered contest in 13 parliamentary constituencies in Punjab amid sweltering heat culminated in Congress winning seven constituencies, ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) three, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) one, Two independent candidates, including jailed pro-Khalistan Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh from Khadoor Sahib, also won.

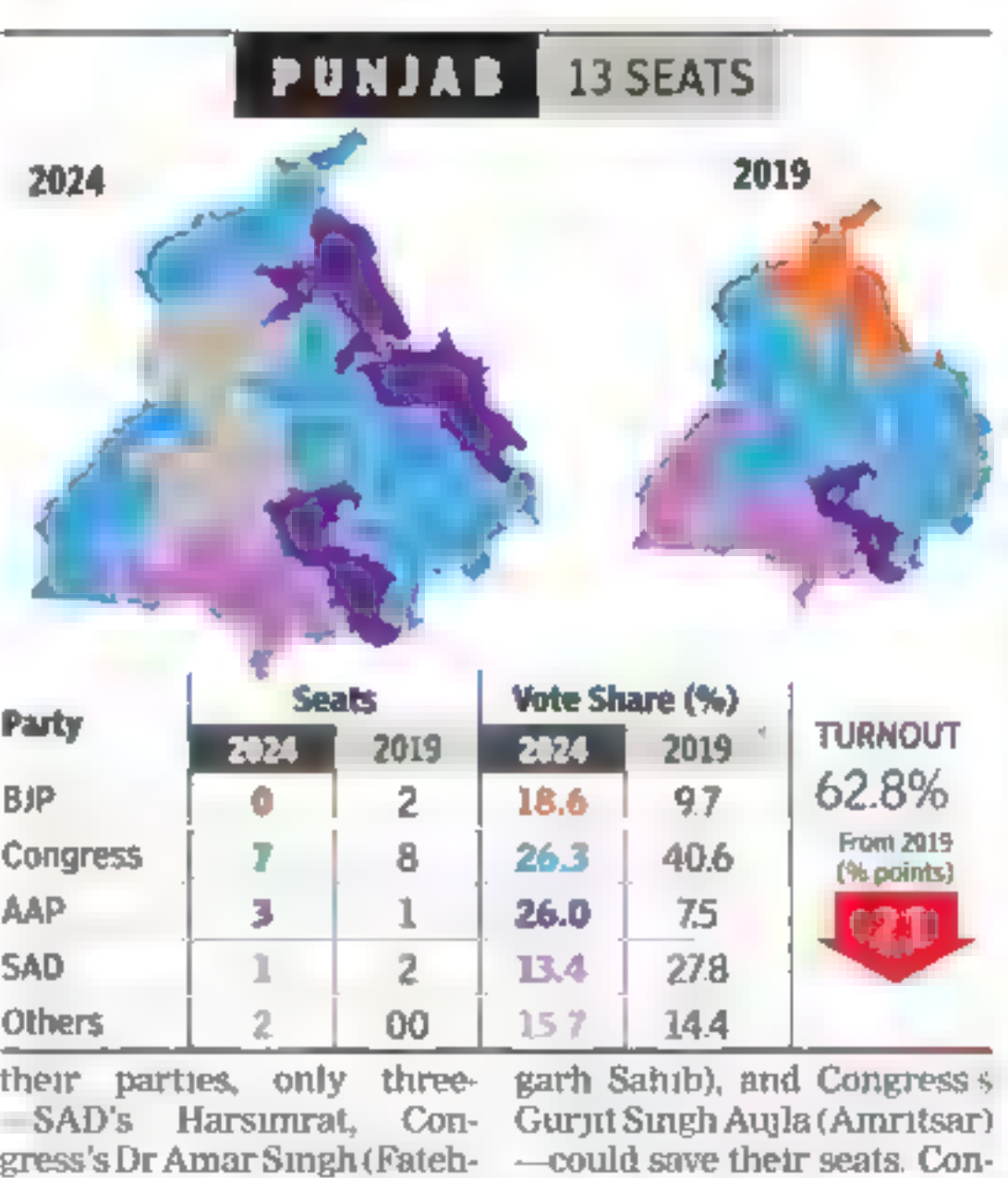
Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassin Beant Singh's son Sarabjit Singh Khalsa, is the second independent candidate who clinched the Faridkot (reserved) constituency on his main poll plank of seeking justice for the October 2015 Guru Granth Sahib desecration case at Bargarh. The results of Khadoor Sahib, Faridkot and Sangrur constituencies highlights simmering discontent among

Sikhs against traditional political parties.

Amritpal Singh, who contested as an independent, won the Khadoor Sahib seat by the highest margin in Punjab—over 1.97 lakh votes. Former chief minister and Congress candidate Charanjit Singh Channi won the Jalandhar (reserved) by over 1.75 lakh votes. However, Congress's Sher Singh Ghubaya just managed to scrape through, beating AAP's Jagdeep Singh Kaka Brar by the lowest margin of 3,242 votes.

The SAD and the BJP contested this election without alliance for the first time since 1996. Though the BJP failed to retain its two existing seats of Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur, it succeeded in increasing its vote share to 18.56% against SAD's 13.42%, which points to BJP's consolidation of Hindu votes.

Out of seven sitting MPs who were renominated by



their parties, only three—SAD's Harsimrat, Congress's Dr Amar Singh (Fateh-

garh Sahib), and Congress's Gurjit Singh Aujla (Amritsar)—could save their seats. Con-

gress's sitting MP from Anandpur Sahib, Manish Tewari, who was contesting from Chandigarh this time, was successful, but with a very slim margin.

A total of 12 MLAs, including five cabinet ministers of the AAP government, were in fray in the June 1 Lok Sabha elections. Of these, only one cabinet minister and Barnala MLA Gurmeet Singh Meht Hayer could win his Sangrur constituency. Other than Meht Hayer, only two MLAs were successful—Congress's Dera Baba Nanak Legislator Sukhinder Singh Randhawa (Gurdaspur) and Dr Raj Kumar Chhabwal, who was elected to assembly on Congress ticket and now has won the Lok Sabha seat on AAP ticket.

Also, Vidhan Sabha speaker accepted the resignation of AAP's Jalandhar West MLA Sheela Angural, who joined BJP before the Lok Sabha polls.

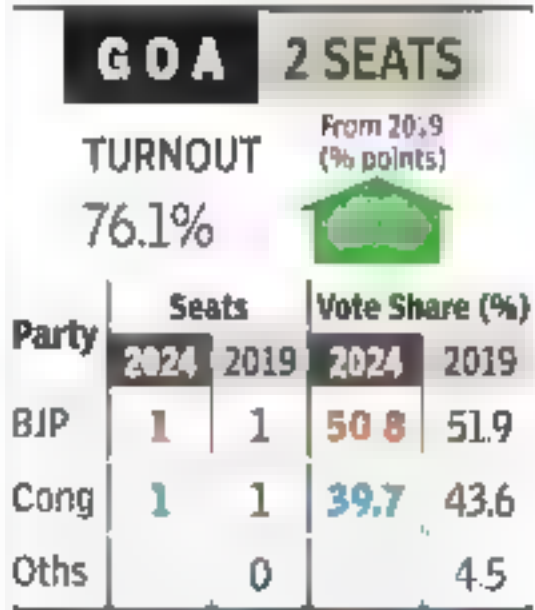
It's 1-1 in Goa as BJP fails southern test

TEAM TOI

Panaji: Weighed down by distrust and disenchantment, BJP failed to lift itself despite PM Modi's two rallies in three months, as it allowed Congress to defend its South Goa seat.

The verdict also put paid to BJP's efforts to send Pallavi Dempe, one of the richest candidates, as the party's first woman Lok Sabha member from Goa. Paljavi lost to Congress' Capt Viriato Fernandes by a margin of 13,535 votes.

A missive from the archbishop of Goa and Daman proved to be one of the turning



points, as Salcete taluka overwhelmingly voted against BJP. The anti-BJP sentiment among the ST community also contributed to the loss.

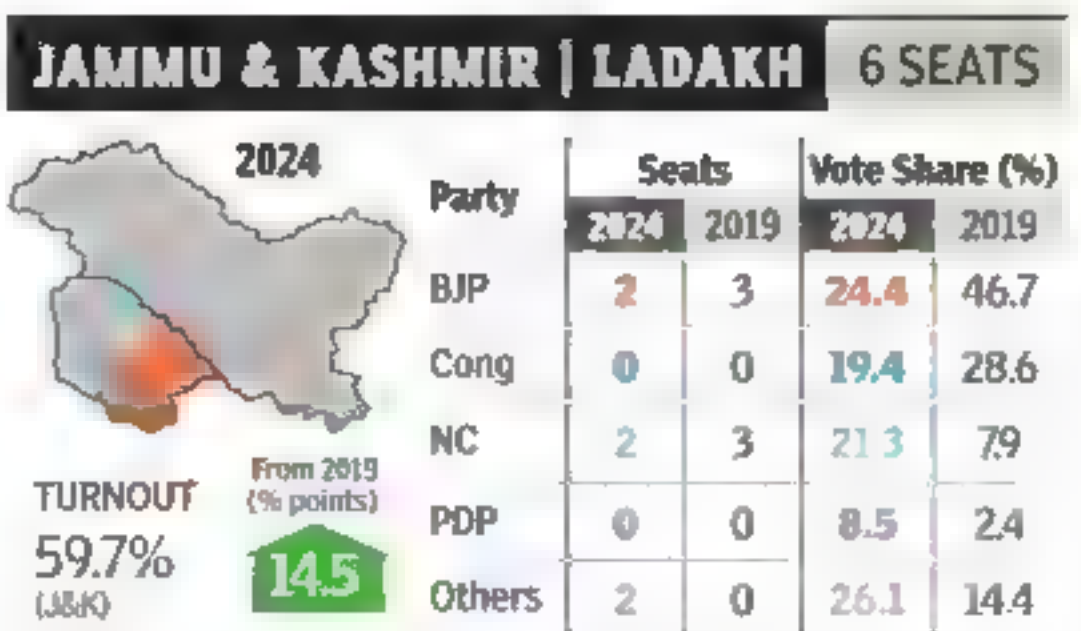
The only solace for BJP was that it retained its North Goa citadel, with Union minister Shripad Naik securing the seat for a historic sixth term, with a record margin of 1.2 lakh votes against former Union minister Ramakant Khalap of Congress. BJP state president Sadanand Shet Navade blamed the South Goa loss on consolidation of votes on religious lines.

Rumble in the Valley as Mehbooba, Omar lose

TEAM TOI

The first Lok Sabha elections held after the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of J&K into two Union territories five years ago delivered unexpected results. Former CMs Omar Abdullah of National Conference (NC) and Mehbooba Mufti of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) conceded defeat even before the counting of votes concluded on Tuesday.

BJP maintained its stronghold in Jammu region. Union minister Jitendra Singh, seeking his third con-



secutive term, won in Udhampur, while party colleague and sitting MP Jugal Kishore retained Jammu. In 2019, NC had secured

all three seats in the valley, while BJP won both seats in Jammu region.

In Ladakh, now a separate Union territory, the lone seat

went to independent candidate Mohamad Haneeefa, a former NC member who contested after leaving the party with the entire unit from the Shia-majority Kargil region. Haneeefa triumphed over Tsering Namgyal of Congress and BJP's Tashi Gyalson.

In the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat, NC's Aga Roolullah Mehdi defeated PDP youth president Waheed Para. Mehdi pledged to raise the abrogation of Article 370, saying, "I will take the people's voice to Parliament and seek its restoration. This mandate increases my responsibility."

PDP chief Mufti lost to NC candidate Mian Altaf Ahmad in Anantnag Rajouri. In Baramulla former MLA and independent candidate Sheikh Abdul Rashid, also known as Engineer Rashid and currently incarcerated in Delhi's Tihar jail in a terror-funding case, defeated NC vice-president Abdullah People's Conference president Sajad Gani Lone came third.

Rashid, arrested by NIA in 2019, is the first mainstream politician to be charged under the anti-terrorism UAPA. His sons—Abrar and Asrar—campaign on his behalf.

GUNTUR, ANDHRA	CHEVELLA, TELANGANA	SOUTH GOA	KURUKSHETRA, HARYANA	CHHINDWARA, MP	NELLORE, ANDHRA	ERODE, TN
RICHEST Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani TDP WON AGAINST Kilari Venkata Rosaiah YSRCP BY 3,44,695 VOTES	Konda V Reddy WON AGAINST Gaddam Ranjith Reddy Cong BY 1,72,897 VOTES	Pallavi Dempo LOST TO Capt Viriato Fernandes Cong BY 13,535 VOTES	Naveen Jindal WON AGAINST Sushil Gupta AAP BY 29,021 VOTES	Nakul Nath LOST TO Bunty Vivek Sahu BJP BY 1,13,618 VOTES	Prabhakar Reddy Vemireddy WON AGAINST Venumbaka Reddy YSRCP BY 2,45,902 VOTES	Ashok Kumar LOST TO KE Prakash DMK BY 2,36,566 VOTES

Poll Guarantees Lift Cong Vote Share, Stop BJP March

TEAM TOI

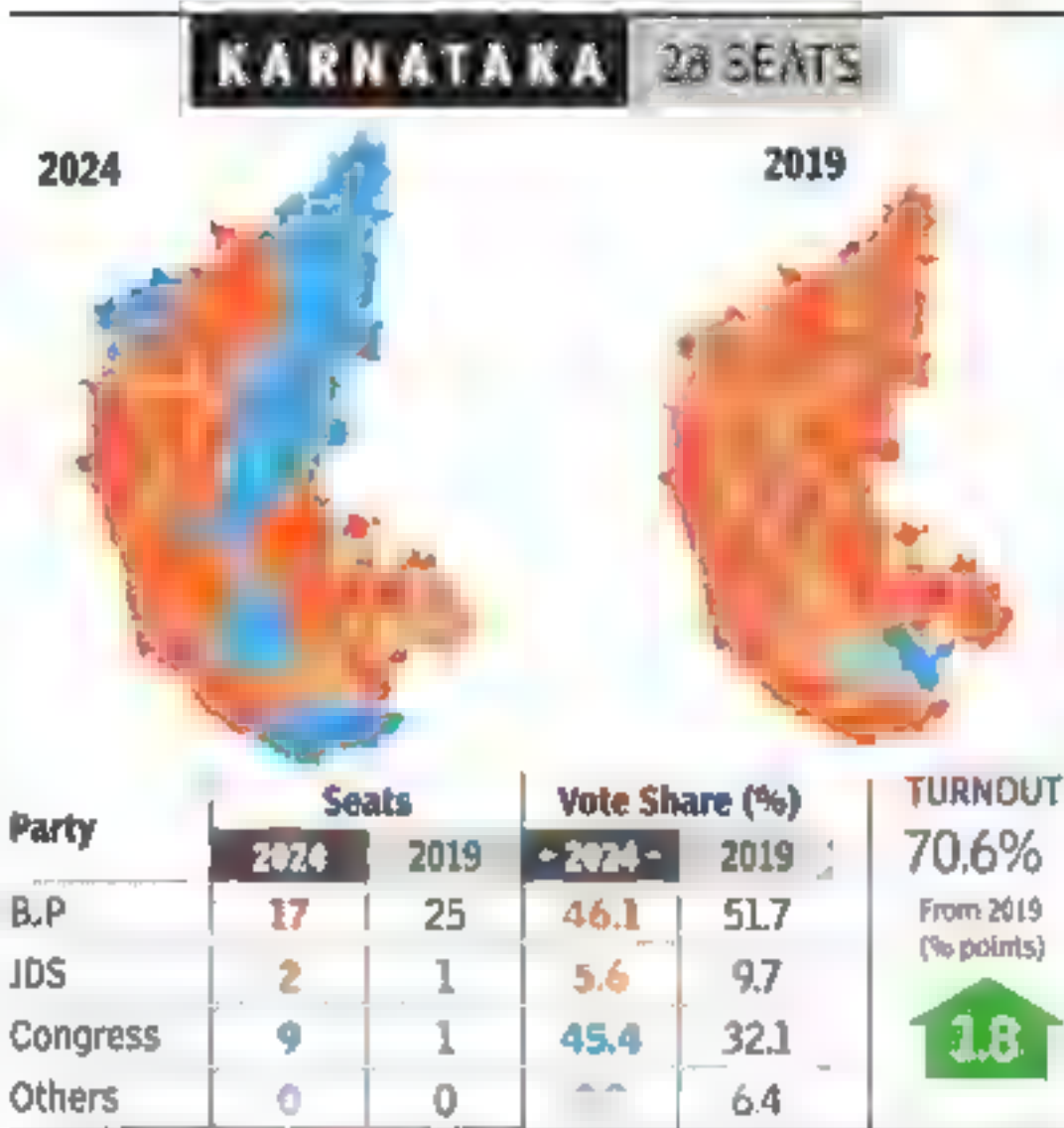
Bengaluru: The much hyped five poll guarantees announced by Congress have boosted the party's vote share in Karnataka but they failed to help it win enough seats.

Congress was hoping that its schemes—free bus rides for women, free electricity, free rations, and allowances for women and unemployed youths—for which state govt earmarked Rs 52,000 crore in the budget, along with the Rs 1 lakh offer to women heads of family in its national manifesto, would influence voters and help it reach the double-digit mark. But the party fell short by one seat.

Despite the focus being on women, the party did not see an uptick in the number of seats it won. The vote-share difference of less than 1% between Congress and BJP spoke volumes.

BJP's 'Modi ki guarantee', in response to Congress's guarantees, worked for the saffron party in securing 17 constituencies, though it failed to reach the target of 20-plus seats. BJP crafted a narrative challenging the guarantee schemes, claiming that these welfare initiatives, though appealing, are being funded at the expense of taxpayers, leading to a rise in the cost of daily essentials and hampering development works.

While Congress performed well in the north and central Karnataka regions, winning 7 of the 14 seats, it failed to deliver in the Vokkaliga-dominated south where it secured only two of the 14 seats. In 2019, BJP won 12 seats in the south and 14 in the north.



Senior party functionaries said Congress this time managed to win the maximum seats in Kalyana Karnataka (Hyderabad Karnataka), largely because of the consolidation of Muslim and SC/ST votes. While Muslim consolidation was on expected lines, the SC/ST consolidation was due to Congress central campaign theme alleging that the Constitution (reservation) is under serious threat if BJP returned to office.

After former Uttara Kannada BJP MP Anant Kumar Hegde said the Constitution could be changed if BJP won a thumping majority in Parliament, Rahul Gandhi and other senior Congress functionaries upped the rhetoric to specifically declare that this election was about protecting the 'samvidhan' (Constitution) and 'gareeb' (poor).

Though BJP denied Hegde a ticket and kept assuring that the Constitution would remain untouched, it did not help its cause.

In BJP's stronghold of Kittur-Karnataka (Mumbai-Karnataka), Congress managed to wrest only Chikkodi, and it is being said that this was largely due to a personal feud between the Jarkiholi brothers and women and child development minister Laxmi Hebbalkar.

Party insiders revealed there was an unwritten rule wherein the Jarkiholi brothers, despite being in different parties, would support BJP in Belagavi and Congress in Chikkodi. This arrangement was made to ensure the victory of PWD minister Satish Jarkiholi's daughter Priyanka, and defeat Hebbalkar's son Mrunal, especially con-



MIXED BAG: 'Modi ki guarantee' helped the saffron party secure wins in 17 constituencies

sidering her proximity to Congress state president and deputy CM DK Shivakumar, who has been actively involved in efforts to gain control over Belagavi.

Another significant factor that worked in favour of Congress was the display of unity. BJP had hoped to exploit the differences between chief minister Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar. However, Congress made sure to exhibit enough camaraderie, both publicly and internally. Both leaders took part in joint campaigns across the state.

Following a disappointing performance in last year's assembly elections, the saffron party was hoping for a resurgence in the state under the new leadership of state BJP president BY Vijayendra, son of former CM BS Yediyurappa, by single-handedly winning over 20 seats. Yediyurappa had fought against all odds to se-

cure the Karnataka BJP chief post for his son. However, the results have turned out to be a mixed bag, thanks to infighting within the party.

The father-son duo failed to prove their influence over the party in north Karnataka, where the major Lingayat community to which they belong, resides.

Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, who were vying to prove their mettle in south Karnataka, have failed to make a significant impact. However, it was AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge who stole the march, ensuring a big victory for the party in Kalyana Karnataka.

Nevertheless, the results proved that the alliance between BJP and JDS proved helpful for both parties to check Congress dominance in the Vokkaliga-dominated areas of the Old Mysuru region. Though they lost Hassan, political pundits attribute the negative result more to JDS candidate Praywal Revanna than the parties.

The biggest setback has been for Shivakumar, who had emerged as the Vokkaliga face wrestling influence from the Gowda family in the assembly polls held last year. The community seems to be miffed with the Congress govt over a host of issues in the past 12 months, including the caste census report.

The 2024 poll outcome in the state also clearly indicates that Karnataka has voted differently in national and state elections. Since 2004, Karnataka voters have consistently supported the saffron party, even during the Congress-led UPA govt's strong performances in 2004 and 2009.

40-40: TN voters give it all to DMK alliance

TEAM TOI

Chennai: Forty out of forty. That's what Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin told his party cadres last month, urging them to ensure that DMK and its allies win all the 39 Lok Sabha seats in the state and the one in neighbouring Puducherry. And INDIA bloc ticked all the 40 boxes on Tuesday.

The big win in the three-cornered fight gives credence to the alliance's ideological bonding strengthened by the common opposition to BJP. It also leaves AIADMK and BJP, former electoral partners, in doldrums to rethink their strategies before the 2026 assembly election.

While AIADMK's unimpressive line-up failed to impress the electorate, BJP couldn't do any better with its high-profile candidates like state president K Annamalai (Coimbatore), Union minister L Murugan (Nilgiris) and former Telangana governor Tamilisai Soundararajan (Chennai South). Ousted AIADMK leader O Panneerselvam, who contested in Ramnathapuram as an NDA-backed independent, lagged behind DMK ally IUMML's K Navaskani by a margin of more than 1.6 lakh (yet to be announced).

The counting gave some anxious moments to many candidates. After leaving initially, BJP's Trinamool candidate and MLA Nainar Narendran fell by the wayside and Congress candidate Robert Bruce won by more than 1.6 lakh votes. AIADMK ally and DMK Virudhunagar candidate Vignesh Prabhakar maintained a lead over his Congress rival Manicka Tagore, who finally registered a thin margin of more than 4,000 votes. PMK's Dharmapuri candidate and Sowmya Anbumani (NDA) gave a tough fight to DMK's A Mani before losing by a margin of 21,000 votes. At the end of counting, DMK's Ganapathy Rajkumar was ahead of Annamalai by



SUN-RISE CONTINUES IN TAMIL NADU

more than one lakh votes.

Clearly, a divided opposition and a vitriolic anti NDA campaign that centred on allegations of divisive communal politics by BJP and Centre starving state of funds helped INDIA bloc's success in TN. Stalin's strategy to showcase his priorities of politics and governance helped win over the Tamil audience. In Puducherry, too, Congress candidate and sitting MP V Vaithilingam won, beating his BJP rival A Namassivayam by a margin of around one lakh votes.

As soon as the trends showed INDIA bloc leading in most of the constituencies, Stalin visited his father MK Karunanidhi's memorial on Marina beach in Chennai and paid his respects. Later in the evening, Stalin said, "I know my height," repeating his father's famous words when asked about his aspirations and probability of his playing a role at the national level. Stalin will leave for Delhi on Wednesday morning to take part in the INDIA bloc meeting. He thanked his alliance leaders and cadres for their efforts "to defeat fascism and to safeguard democracy and the Constitution".

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the DMK-led alliance

bucked the national trend to win 38 seats in TN, leaving only the Theni seat to the then united AIADMK in the company of BJP and grabbing the lone Puducherry seat as well. With the 2024 Lok Sabha poll victory in TN, Stalin has pulled off a hatrick with his successes in 2019 and 2021 (assembly election) after taking over the DMK reins. Party colleagues and allies say the victory is a referendum for Stalin's governance.

In the opposition camp, while AIADMK rejoiced its second position with an overall vote share of 20%, having contested 32 seats, the BJP was muted in its celebration, having lost all the 19 seats it contested.

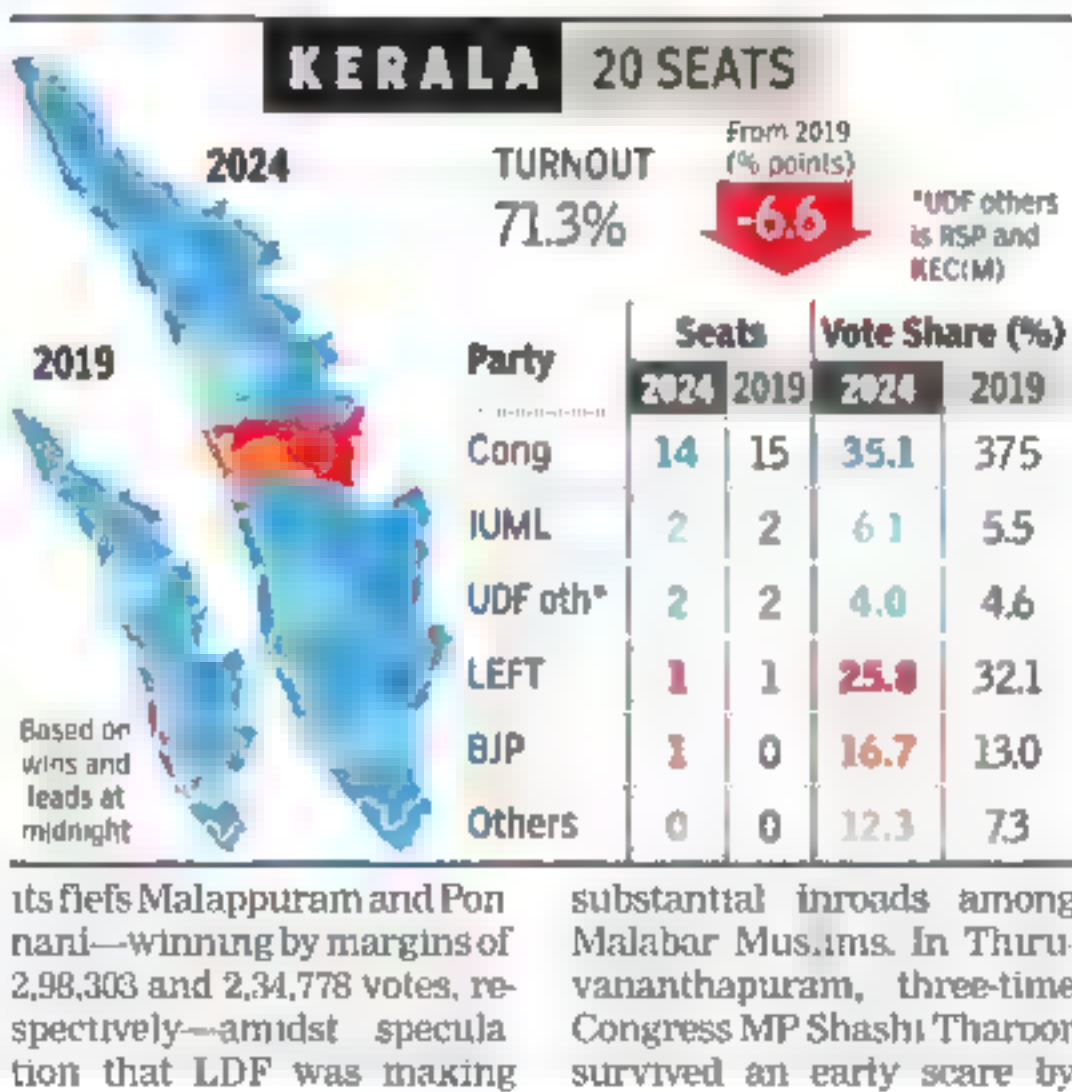
The opposition contest and campaign centred on "exposing" DMK and Stalin with attacks on their failure to keep the pre-poll promises and practicing corruption and dynasty politics. The 'DMK files' (audio recordings of alleged conversations of some DMK functionaries), allegations of misgovernance, poor law and order, arrest and IT searches of senior ministers and charges of nepotism following the elevation of Stalin's son Udhayanidhi failed to cut ice with the electorate.

For first time in God's Own Country, lotus blooms as Left wilts, UDF retains its share

TEAM TOI

Kochi: UDF won 18 out of 20 seats in Kerala, almost mirroring its 191 sweep in 2019, but the jubilation was overshadowed by nothing short of a historic BJP win in Thrissur: a prestigious constituency with almost 50% minority votes and where the three-cornered contest was supposed to underline that, try as they might, the saffron party's polarising politics had no place in this 'progressive' state.

The UDF won by an above-1 lakh margin in 11 of 18 constituencies, including in Wayanad where Rahul Gandhi trumped his nearest rival Annie Raja of CPI by 3,64,422 votes. UDF's second-biggest partner Muslim League retained its stronghold on



its fief Malappuram and Ponnani—winning by margins of 2,98,303 and 2,34,778 votes, respectively—amidst speculation that LDF was making

substantial inroads among Malabar Muslims. In Thiruvananthapuram, three-time Congress MP Shashi Tharoor survived an early scare by

finally defeating his nearest rival Rajeev Chandrasekhar of BJP by 15,000 votes, a steep fall from his handsome 90,000 plus margin in 2019.

The LDF, in contrast, barely saved face with a win at the Alathur reserved seat where K Radhakrishnan, a minister in the Pinarayi cabinet, won by 19,587 votes and came excruciatingly close at Attingal, its candidate losing by just 1,708 votes. Alathur, interestingly, also saw the largest number of NOTA votes in the state at 12,033. The LDF's Lok Sabha campaign, led by the chief minister from the front, had banked on an aggressive strategy to cast itself as the sole protector of minorities and champion of secularism but failed miserably.

The bulk of Muslim and

Christian votes appeared to have gone UDF's way.

BJP-led NDA had put up a stiff fight in all 20 constituencies this time and had expected to come a close second in Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur. In the event, actor-turned politician Suresh Gopi's triumph in Thrissur by a margin of 74,686 votes was as surprising as sensational.

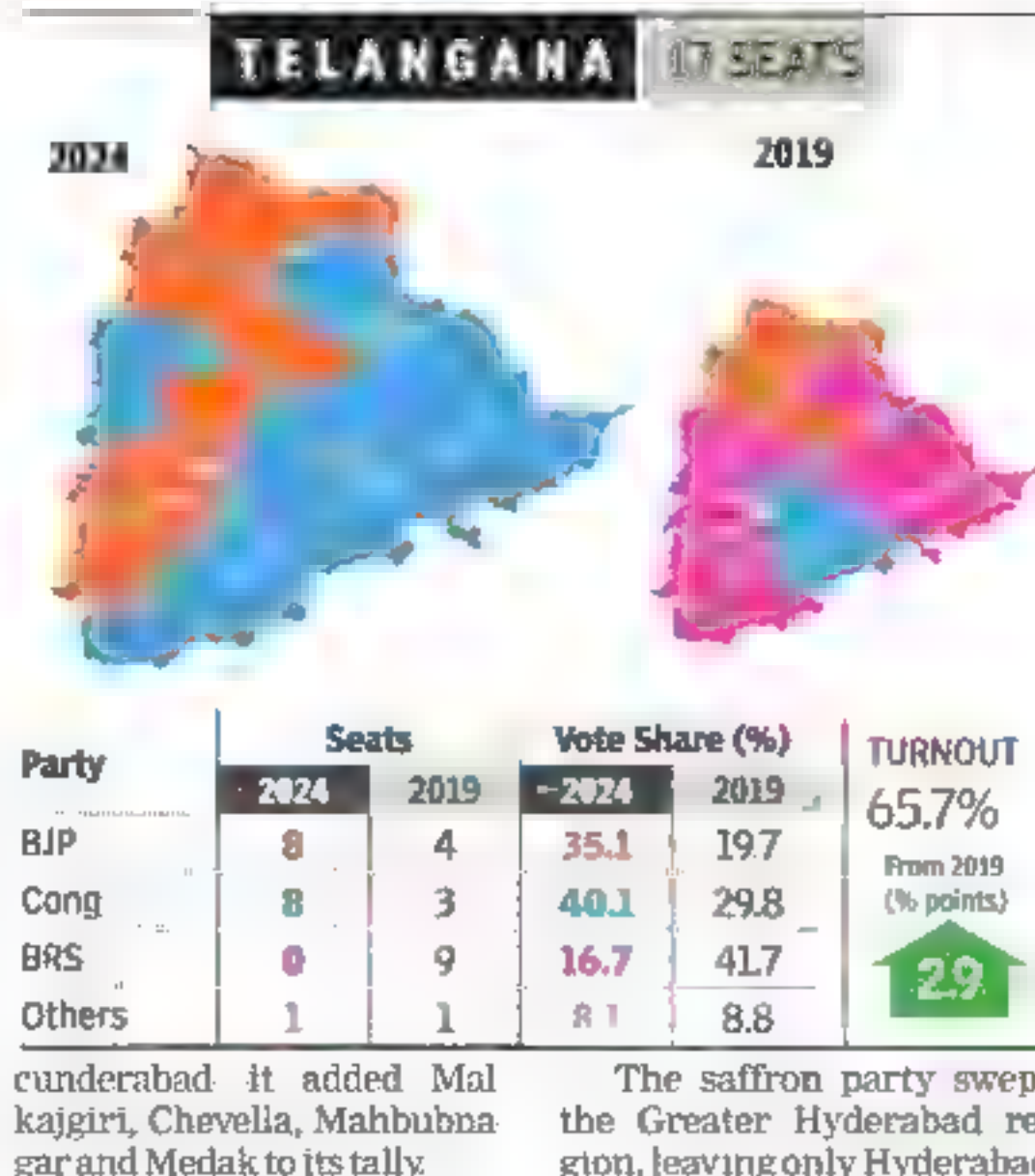
Surprising, because he was ranged against two formidable candidates, while 39% of the electorate in the constituency comprises minority votes—16% Christian and 23% Muslim votes. BJP had pursued an aggressive statewide strategy of seeking Christian support and it appears to have paid dividends, especially among its more affluent sections in Thrissur.

In T battle, saffron hue wipes out pink party; Cong's honeymoon continues

TEAM TOI

Hyderabad: For the first time since the formation of Telangana in 2014, Congress and BJP have become dominant political forces in the state, both sharing the spoils of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections with eight seats each of the 17 up for grabs. This was largely a result of a formidable force like the BRS being decimated.

BJP's performance is especially remarkable given that it had no traditional base here like Congress. The four seats it won in 2019 gave it hope of building a base in the southern states beyond Karnataka and the party started working towards making it a gateway to the south. BJP was eyeing 10 seats but managed eight. BJP had won only one seat in 2014 and four in 2019. While it retained four—Adilabad, Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Se-



cunderabad it added Malakajiri, Chevella, Mahabubnagar and Medak to its tally.

The saffron party swept the Greater Hyderabad region, leaving only Hyderabad

for Asafuddin Owaisi. Congress rode the honeymoon period it was enjoying since winning the assembly election in Dec last year. In 2014, it had got only two seats and three in 2019.

The Lok Sabha polls outcome strengthens chief minister A Revanth Reddy, who also heads the Telangana Congress unit. Revanth had openly declared that these results were a referendum on state govt's performance and projected it as a battle between Congress and BJP, while dismissing BRS as a 'fringe player'.

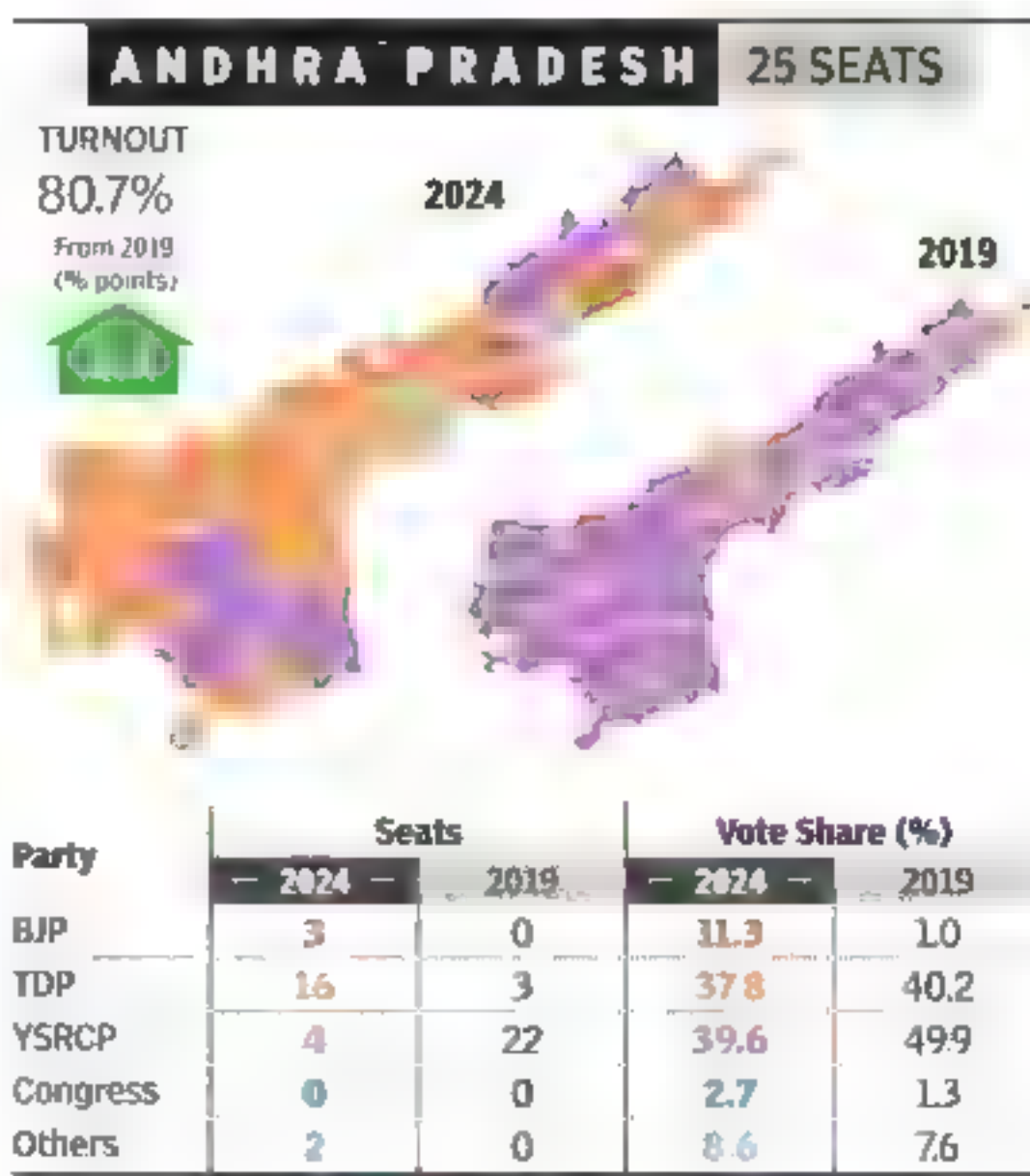
BRS had 11 seats in 2014 and nine in 2019 but drew a blank this time. This is the only election where the pink party could not win a single seat since its inception in 2001, losing even the Medak seat, which BRS supremo K Chandrashekar Rao had won in 2014.

Chandrababu Naidu plays his cards right, catapults onto national stage

TEAM TOI

Hyderabad: The last minute electoral patch up with BJP and a return to the NDA fold has resulted in a windfall for TDP in Andhra Pradesh. It also brought forth the fact that TDP has always won big whenever it went to polls in alliance with other political parties in the past—whether BJP, Jana Sena, Left, Janata Dal, BSP or Janata Party. Except for an occasion or two, TDP did not fight any poll without having an electoral understanding with others since its formation in 1982.

TDP, which parted ways with the BJP-led NDA in 2018, was virtually in political oblivion and was kept waiting by BJP national leadership till the eleventh hour.



na, but also to BJP, which has a negligible presence in Andhra Pradesh. In fact, TDP president and chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu has also emerged as a key player in national politics. While YSRCP, which fought the polls alone, could win in four of the 25 Lok Sabha seats in the state, TDP and its partners won 21.

The election was not fought on any major issues in Andhra Pradesh. Even the major demand in 2014 and 2019 polls—special status for AP—had taken a back seat in 2024. But a silent anti-incumbency wave and lack of visible development in the past five years were Jagan's undoing.

An over-confident YSRCP relegated Jagan's father, late YS Rajasekhara Reddy, to the back seat during the campaign, which also did not go down well with the voters.

Leader Board	Party	Seats Won	Seat Share %	Vote Share %	Effective Vote %
	Cong	37	32	29	7
	SP	22	2	16	13
	TMC	12	4	9	4
	DMK	7	6	4	18
	TDP	5	1	2	1
	JDU	9	4	7	6
	SENA (UBT)	4	18	2	1
	SENA	0	7	0	9
	YSRCP	0	9	0	9
	LJP	0	9	0	9
	NCP (SP)	7	3	1	3
	NCP	1	0	2	8
	AAP	3	2	1	1
	RJD	4	4	0	7
	CPM	4	1	0	7
	JDS	2	1	0	3
	BJD	1	1	0	2
	VBA	0	0	0	4
	ADMK	0	1	0	9
	SAD	1	1	0	2
	PMK	0	0	0	3
	Other	0	0	0	2

Indian Political League

No less than 64.2 crore people have made their choice in the world's largest election exercise, voicing an array of preferences and behaviours along the way. From the seven phases to exit polls to counting day, it has been an unpredictable affair yet again, much like the twists and turns of a nail-biting IPL finish. TOI brings you the highlights and analyses the trends of the 2024 verdict

Seats That Changed Parties

Turncoat seats, which switched from BJP, boosted INDIA tally

● BJP ● Other NDA ● Cong ● Other INDIA ● Others

208 SEATS FLIPPED

41 SEATS FLIPPED FROM BJP TO CONG

SEATS FLIPPED FROM BJP TO NON-CONG INDIA ALLIES

9 SEATS FLIPPED FROM CONG TO BJP

WHERE SEATS FLIPPED IN FAVOUR OF NDA

ANDHRA PRADESH 16
ODISHA 11
BIHAR 8
TELANGANA 8
MAHARASHTRA 5

WHERE SEATS FLIPPED IN FAVOUR OF INDIA

UTTAR PRADESH 37
MAHARASHTRA 23
RAJASTHAN, TN 10 each
KARNATAKA, BEHAL 9 each
TAMIL NADU, BIHAR 8 each

Team INDIA's Master Blaster From South

Stalin-led DMK has been nothing short of a swashbuckling opener, notching up 100% in 2019 and 2024. Chandrababu Naidu's TDP was a close second. INDIA allies Trinamool and SP notched up an impressive 62% and 52% respectively, effectively boosting the alliance total. The laggards — AIADMK and BSP — were out for a duck.

Regional Parties Prove To Be Smart Finishers

Votes amount to little unless a party can convert them into seats. Better conversion means a party won a seat with a small haul of votes. SP and TDP boosted tallies in their alliances in UP and Andhra. JD(U), which added to NDA numbers in Bihar, proved to be a smart finisher too.

2019	2024
7,56,029	9,81,402
22,97,985	13,80,226
11,33,151	9,71,587
5,57,917	6,69,778
31,29,441	7,98,559
41,71,782	7,90,386
5,98,472	5,30,186
7,06,228	33,02,865

Matchup Stats

STATE OF THE OPPOSITION

While the latest Lok Sabha elections, along with those in 2019 and 1977, were largely bipolar contests, where 424 and 514 seats, respectively, saw just the two top contenders race in over 80% of the votes, the period from 1991 to 2014 saw more seats turning into multi-sided fights. The 2024 elections also had one seat where there was no polling, "Surat, as all the other candidates withdrew their nomination. A bipolar contest indicates united opposition, which was the case this year. Multi-cornered contests happen when opposition is fractured. In 2024, there were 108 seats where the two leading candidates polled between 60 and 80% of the votes.

Combined votes of winner and runner-up	1977	1991	1996	1998	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019	2024
<40%	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1*
40-60%	1	52	50	6	29	38	62	15	3	10
60-80%	25	173	225	208	144	146	208	279	76	108
>80%	514	309	266	329	370	359	272	249	464	424

Changing Room

BJP Sees Big Dip In Rajasthan, Haryana

BJP's overall vote share fell marginally from 2019, while that of Congress rose nationally by over 2 percentage points. The saffron party's loss of vote share was significant in Rajasthan and Haryana, falling to 49.2% and 48.1% from 58.5% and 58%, respectively, in the previous polls, which could be a fallout of anger over the Agniveer scheme. TMC seems to have reclaimed lost ground, netting 45.8% of the vote share, while BJP's dipped.

2019	2024
37.4%	37.2%
19.5%	21.7%

Reserved Constituencies

Dalits Shun BSP, Fewer SC/STs Pick BJP; Cong, SP Gain

While BJP won 46 of 84 SC seats back in 2019, it could manage only 29 of them this time and BSP seemed to have gained from the loss, winning 20 and 7 seats, respectively. TMC won 6. BJP also lost ST support, scoring 24 seats. Congress more than doubled its tally to win 13.

SC 84 seats	ST 47 seats
2024	2024
2019	2019
2014	2014
2009	2009
2004	2004
2019	2019
2014	2014
2009	2009
2004	2004
2019	2019
2014	2014
2009	2009
2004	2004

Muslim-Influence Seats

TMC, Cong, SP Scale Up; Hindi Belt Loss For BJP

Continuing the trend from 2019, BJP lost some Muslim-influence seats, again mostly in Uttar Pradesh. From 48 seats in 2019, the saffron party fell to 37, including the loss of 7 seats in the Hindi belt. Trinamool Congress, Congress and Samajwadi Party improved their tally from the last LS polls, winning 23, 14 and 11 seats, respectively. Muslims, like Dalits, ignored Mayawati's BSP.

2019	2024
48	37
14	11
23	19

Tempo To Biryani, 2024 Campaign In 9 Objects

From the useful washing machine to the ubiquitous tempo on the roads, some objects have been elevated politically this election season. An X-Ray, for instance, doesn't just show up bones and cracks doctors want to see, but apparently, also the plot and party pad you don't particularly want the govt to see. TOI takes a look at innocuous articles that have been converted into campaign ammo

Washing machines: Once a symbol of prosperity in Indian households, the washing machine is now a household name of a different kind. From members of the ruling party being seen washing clothes in public to opposition parties using it as a political tool, the washing machine has become a symbol of political discourse. UP CM Yogi Adityanathi and PM Modi saying Congress would feel like a terrorist if voted to office.

Tempo: The season of biryani, BJP's Covid relief drive, and the tempo are all part of the same story. In 2023, the tempo was a symbol of the ruling party's relief drive. In 2024, it's a symbol of the opposition's relief drive. In 2025, it's a symbol of the ruling party's relief drive.

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Impact Players

Big Wins Up, Record Set

Close contests, where the margin was less than 10,000 votes dipped over 2019, as did big winners who won by more than 3 lakh votes. One of the most exciting results was in Mumbai North West where the Sena (UBT) candidate was declared to have won by one vote before Ravindra Waikar of Sena (Shinde) clinched it with 48 votes.

An increase in population and polling have led to victory margins rising over time

11,75,092 Record margin won by Shankar Lalwani of BJP in Indore

2,18,674 NOT A VOTE POLLED WAS A RECORD AS WAS THE WINNING MARGIN

Same Seat!

IN INDORE

2019

2024

Margin Frequency

Less than 1,000

1,000-10,000

10,000-50,000

50,000-1 lakh

1 lakh to 3 lakh

3 lakh to 6 lakh

Over 6 lakh

4

2

28

64

79

239

127

4

3

17

97

120

232

67

7

Youngest, Oldest Candidates Win

Congress's Sanjana Jataw, SP's Pushpendra Saroj and Priya Saroj became the youngest candidates to win at 25 years, while DMK's T R Baalu (82) became the oldest.

The 12th Lok Sabha was the youngest ever

46.4 years

55.5

52.6

53.0

55.6

54.0

54.7yrs Avg age

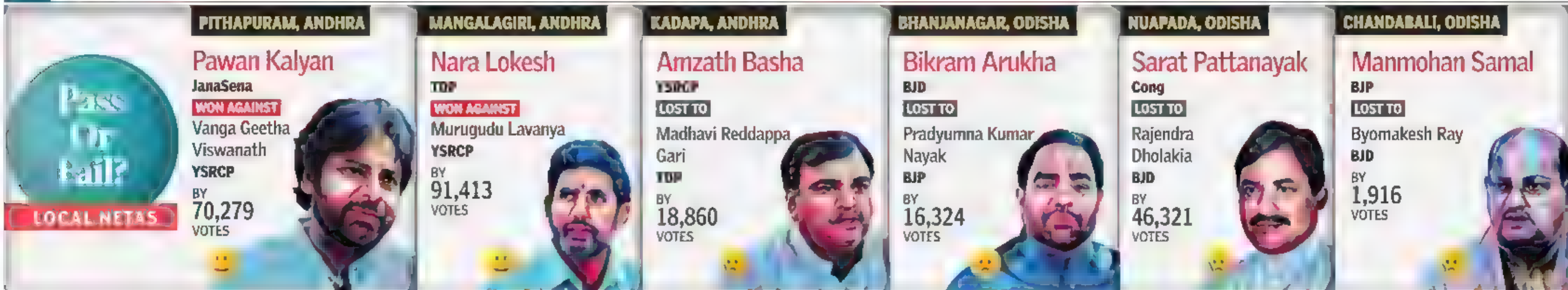
57 yrs

54.4

55.1

57.8

53.5



AP hits refresh button, TDP halts Jagannaut

Team TOI

N Chandrababu Naidu is set to create history by becoming the first chief minister of Andhra Pradesh to get a fourth term with his landslide victory in the assembly elections. His father-in-law and TDP founder NT Rama Rao had got three terms in united Andhra Pradesh.

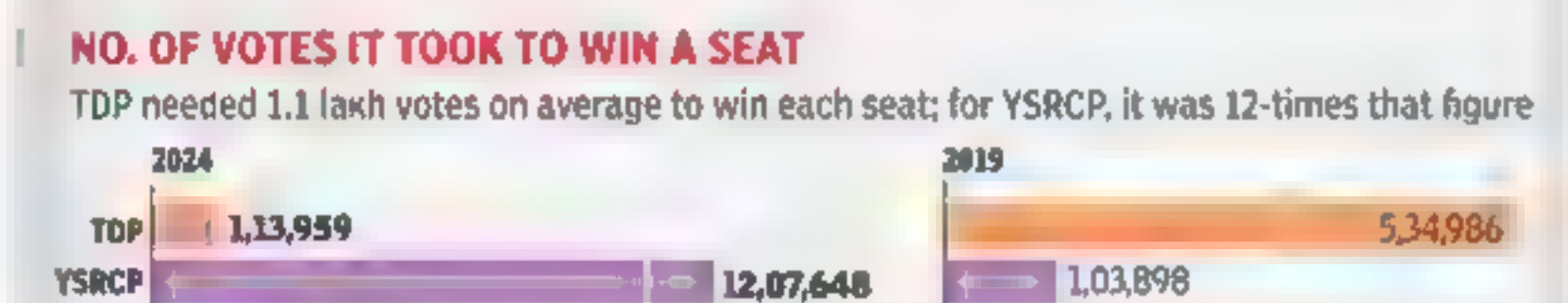
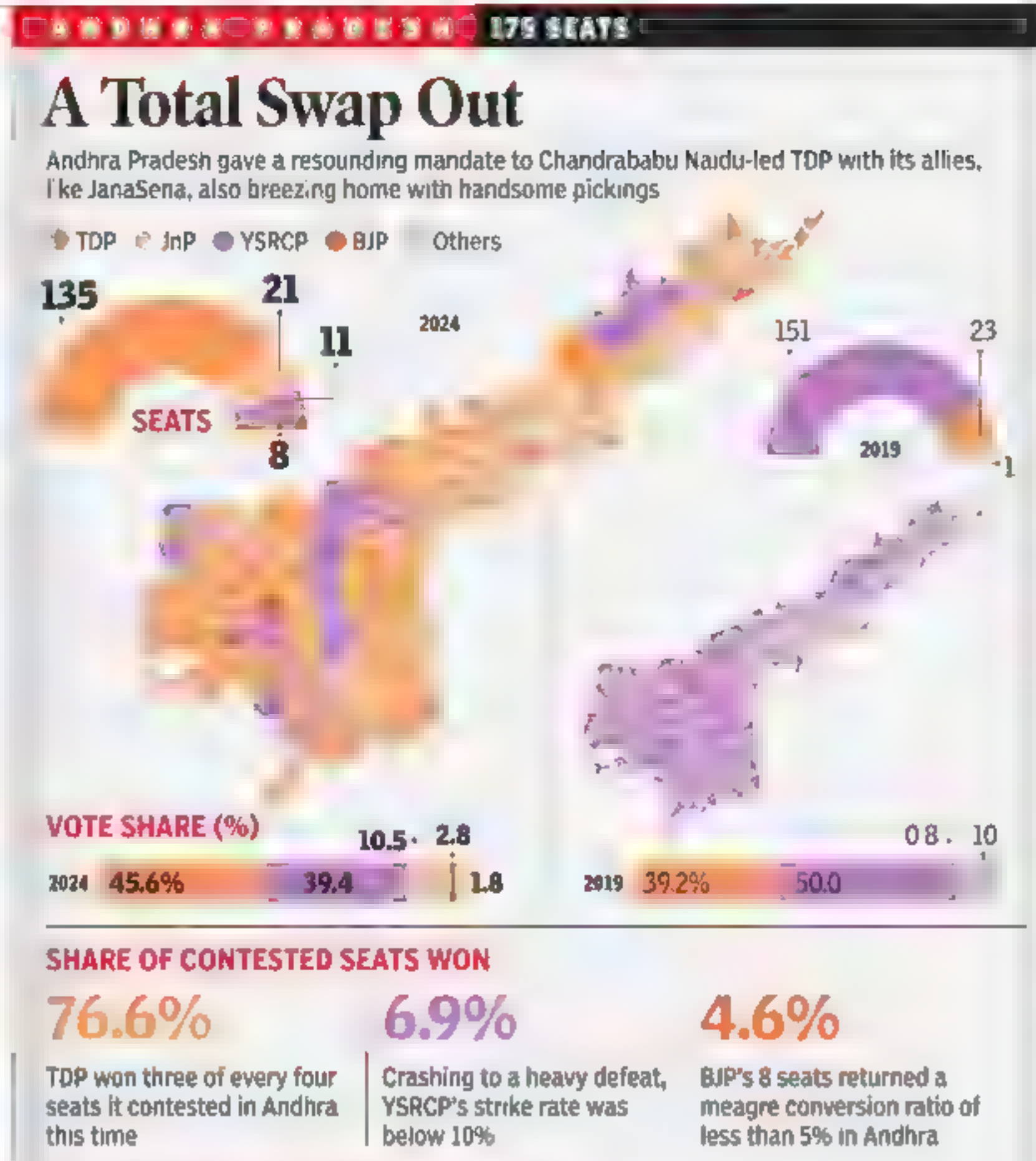
Naidu also registered his eighth assembly win, making him the most senior politician in the state assembly.

The results saw another piece of history in making outgoing CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy losing the status of the leader of opposition in the new assembly as his party YSRCP could not win the minimum 18 seats to get the status. In 1994, Congress, like the YSRCP this time, had lost the status of leader of opposition. NTR was then sworn in as the CM for the third time.

The results mirrored the outcome of the 2019 polls with the TDP now taking the position of YSRCP TDP and its alliance partners, BJP and Jana Sena, have together now bagged 164 of the 175 assembly seats leaving just 11 to YSRCP. Of these, TDP bagged 135. In contrast, YSRCP had won 151 in the 2019 elections.

An analysis of three different regions, Rayalaseema, and south and north coastal Andhra, reveals that a silent anti-incumbency factor coupled with a shift in the traditional vote bank (Muslims, Christians and Dalits) of YSRCP resulted in a big victory for the TDP led alliance.

Factors like super six promises of the TDP including free bus travel for women, increase in monthly pensions to the elderly and widows from Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000, alliance with the BJP and Jana Sena, padayatra by his son and TDP leader Nara Lokesh and arrest of Naidu in the alleged skill development scam by the Jagan government worked in TDP's favour. Near inaccessibility of Jagan to even his own MPs and MLAs, lack of a development narrative in major cities and



overconfidence in the party leadership, went against YSRCP. The results highlighted that women and working classes backed TDP despite YSRCP claiming that it had extended financial benefits to these sections of society.

TDP has never won such massive electoral support in the last three decades. The only time the party came close to such a landslide was in 1994 when NTR won 216 of the 294 assembly seats. Such was the endorsement by voters this time

me that YSRCP lost all but two of its ministers — Jagan and P Ramachandra Reddy.

YSRCP lost its base even in places considered as its bastion — mainly in Rayalaseema. That the Kapu community vote bank stood firmly behind TDP is evident from the outcome in undivided East and West Godavari districts, where Kapus are numerically strong. The assembly elections also saw the emergence of firm actor-turned-politician Pawan Kalyan as a new political force.

The party had struggled for 10 years to stay afloat but this time it made it big at the hustings — both assembly (won 21 seats) and Lok Sabha (two). Pawan had lost from the two places he contested in 2019. This time, the 55-year-old won big from Pithapuram.

BJP, which has negligible political base in AP, struck rich thanks to the alliance. It won seven assembly and three Lok Sabha seats. As in 2014 and 2019 polls, the Congress failed to open its account in the state

CEO Naidu books corner office in Andhra & Centre

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He has seen it all — from a student leader to chief minister to kingmaker of central govts to being pushed into political wilderness and even to jail in an alleged corruption case. But the latest victory in Andhra Pradesh must be the most satisfying for N Chandrababu Naidu, 74, the tech-savvy 'CEO' in a long time.

After winning the 2019 assembly polls, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and his YSRCP cadres tried to relegate Naidu to merely a Kamma community leader by attracting other communities with welfare schemes. But in the past year, Naidu not only managed to break free of the shackles, he also stitched together an alliance with BJP and actor Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena — a consolidated caste bloc against YSRCP.

While Naidu will prefer to be the Andhra CM, he would once again don his old robe of a kingmaker at Centre with his 16 Lok Sabha seats. He lost the role of a mover and shaker of central govts in 2004, after the UPA came to power and Y S Rajasekhara Reddy helmed a Congress win in united AP. YSR and his welfare politics pushed Naidu into oblivion for two terms until he regained power in 2014.

Just like former president Pranab Mukherjee, considered by some to be the 'best prime minister India never had', Naidu is one of the best tech-savvy PMs India never had. Mukherjee aspired to be PM,



CAKEWALK: N Chandrababu Naidu celebrates with son and TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh and family members

but Naidu declined it in 1996. Naidu was the convener of United Front (1996-98) and NDA (1998-2004). He was the most influential regional party leader back then. He played a key role in choosing the PM candidates and presidents during coalition govts.

With AP having bifurcated and left with only 25 MP seats (42 before), and BJP forming govt at Centre on its own post 2014, Naidu could not dictate terms to the Union govt as in the past. His vision for a greenfield world class capital city for AP in Amaravati to compete with Hyderabad could not fructify. As a result, TDP lost the 2019 polls and had just three MPs and 23 MLAs.

Naidu had revolted against NT Rama Rao over the latter's second wife Lakshmi Parvati's increasing influence in TDP affairs. Many MLAs backed the move and elected Naidu as their leader. After the successful intra-party coup, Naidu became the

youngest CM of united AP at 45 and won bouquets and brickbats. The concepts of good governance by integrating technology stood as a role model for many states and at national level. He is often considered as one of the pioneers of IT in India on the administrative side by bringing in industry friendly policies. Hyderabad has developed into an IT hub and the most attractive destination for investments after his policies changed its face.

He faced backlash from voters as his policies did not benefit them directly. As new CM, he will have two challenges — find ways to generate revenues to fund the numerous welfare schemes that Jagan started during his term, together worth around Rs 2.7 lakh crore. He has promised to enhance the amounts on all schemes and add new ones. He will also have to raise resources and encourage investors to return to Amaravati.

Jagan 'splurge' fails to dole out YSRCP win

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Do doles do what netas want them to do? Not always. That's what YS Jagan Mohan Reddy learnt the hard way. Chandrababu Naidu swept away all hopes of a rerun by outgoing Andhra CM Jagan who was riding on the massive spending on a slew of welfare schemes. Now, they have not only left YSRCP in the dumps, the schemes have crippled AP's economy too.

While the people seemed clearly not content with 'doles,' Jagan's narrative on class war — that the polls in Andhra Pradesh were fought between the poor led by YSRCP and feudal forces led by TDP — escalated tempers, prompting many electors to take the side of 'development' and vote him out.

Jagan, who marched to power in 2019 following a historic padayatra, was accused of rarely coming out of his bungalow to meet people. Even his ministers and legislators complained he was not accessible.

His social engineering experiments, too, distanced the party's strong voters from the influential caste groups. He blocked 50% of the posts in the nominated boards, corporations, temple and market committees for SC, ST, BC, and minorities. He also brought women into the 50% reservation bracket in the nominated posts.

Jagan's village/ward volunteer system to deliver govt schemes at the doorsteps of beneficiaries seemed to have boomeranged as party functionaries and cadres were kept out of this mechanism. They did not have any role and left upset.

Sea change in Odisha: BJP wave drowns BJD & Naveen

Team TOI

BJP is all set to form its maiden independent govt in Odisha, with the state voting for a change, bringing to an end the Biju Janata Dal's unbroken 24 year stint led by CM Naveen Patnaik, 77.

Riding anti incumbency against Naveen, BJP — which had shared power with him as a junior coalition partner in Odisha from 2000 to 2009 — diligently crafted its campaign strategy for a double engine govt, blending emotive issues like Odia asmita (pride), people's aspirations and the decisive leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. BJP has bagged 78 seats, BJD 51, Congress 14 and CPM one, with three Independents completing the tally. Naveen himself lost one of the two seats, Kantabanji, but managed to win Hingilli making it his sixth straight win.

"It's a vote for change. An entire generation of people in their early 40s or younger in Odisha has never seen a second CM. Young voters clearly wanted change," said RK Satapathy, a retired professor of political science.

BJP's landmark victory thwarted Naveen's ambition of becoming the longest-serving CM in India, a milestone he would have reached by Aug this year. Naveen had never lost since he first fought the assembly polls in 2000.

Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah campaigned extensively in Odisha, emphasizing on local concerns such as the missing keys of the Ratna Bhandar, the sacred treasure trove of Lord Jagannath at the iconic Puri temple, the increasing influence of Tamil Nadu born IAS officer-turned BJD strategist VK Pandian in Naveen's govt, and the CM's declining health and advanced age.

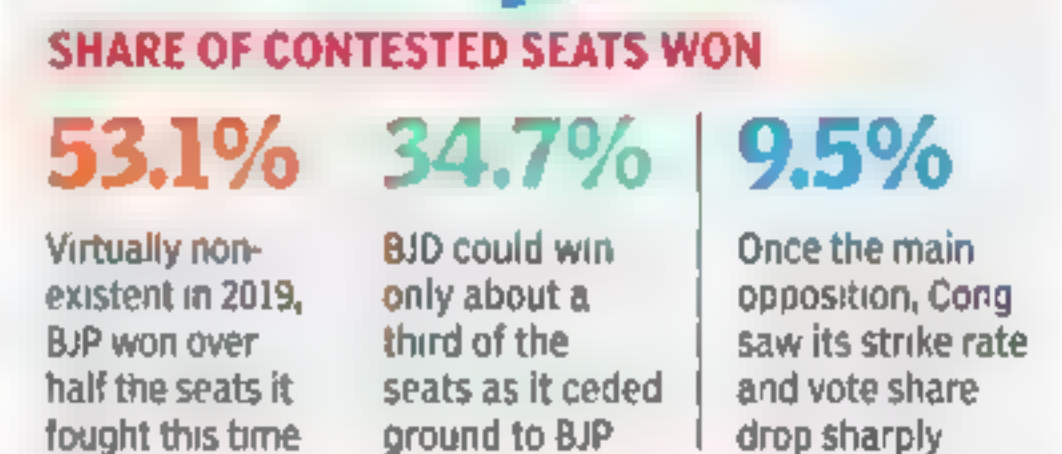
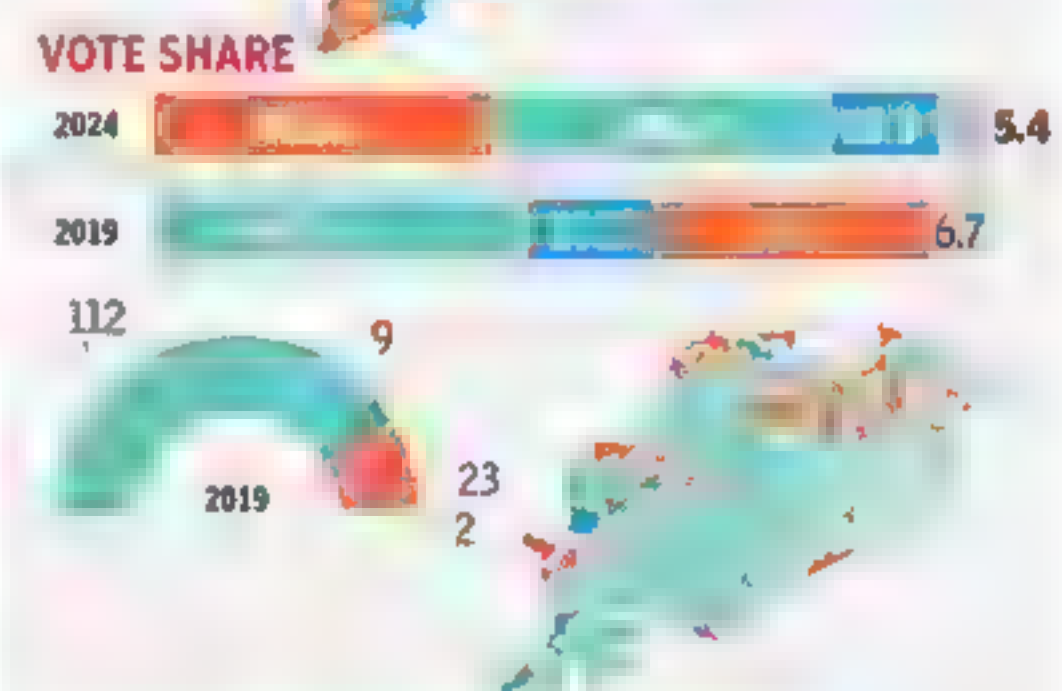
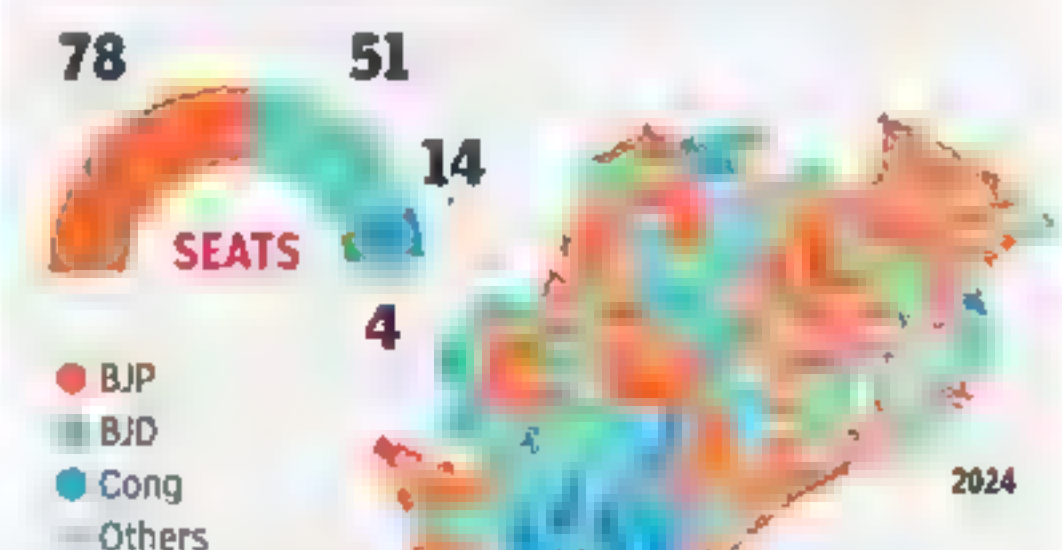
Asking people if they were ready for a CM from Tamil Nadu in Pandian, BJP promised a young and native Odia to occupy the position.

Sensing that public sentiments were turning against his confidante, just ahead of the final phase of the elections on June 1, Naveen announced that Pandian was not

Odisha 147 SEATS

Saffron Surge

BJP and BJD first looked to join hands, but after alliance talks failed, the saffron party made an aggressive push in the coastal state, sending Naveen Patnaik's party out of office



NO. OF VOTES IT TOOK TO WIN A SEAT

BJP needed a little less than 1.3 lakh votes to win each seat while the figure was close to 2 lakh votes for BJD



his successor Naveen also tried to convince people that he is healthy enough to lead the state. But it was too late as voters had made up their minds.

"In the polls being held against the backdrop of failed coalition talks between BJP and BJD, the latter was in a weak position in terms of people's perception. This is be-

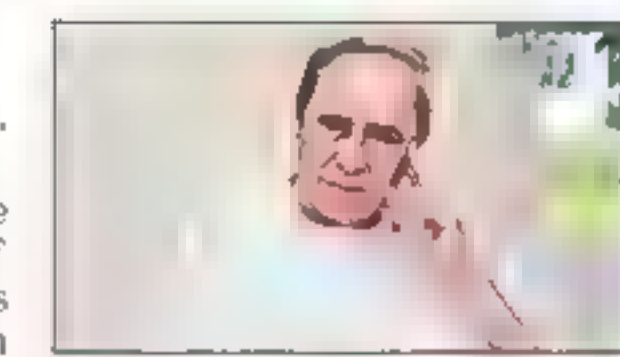
Patnaik makes way for neo-naveen

Ashok.Pradhan@timesgroup.com

He could have etched his name in the annals of India's electoral history as the country's longest-serving CM if he had, yet again, won the polls in Odisha this time. But Naveen Patnaik — the man who is said to have been a reluctant politician who had no intention to join politics after his father Biju Patnaik's death 27 years ago — missed the milestone by a whisker.

Trumped by BJP after close to two-and-a-half decades at the helm, Naveen fell short of former Sikkim chief minister Pawan Chamling's term of 24 years and 165 days. He could have gone past the post in Aug.

People did not endorse Naveen's populist measures, like cash incentives for farmers, youth and women, besides the promise of free electricity for middle class. His governance model and work in health, education, and women empowerment failed



MILESTONE MISSED: Naveen Patnaik

led to boost party's prospects. Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana, which the BJD projected as superior to and more inclusive than the Centre's Ayushman Bharat, failed to make a mark. BJP had been criticising Naveen for not implementing the central scheme and "depriving" the people of Odisha of its benefits.

The Odisha upset also puts a question mark on the acceptability of VK Pandian, who was considered by many as Naveen's successor. An entire generation in their 40s and below, who have only seen Naveen's govt since they voted for the first time, will see a new brand of politics now.

The fall guy: Will party pander to Pandian now?

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One of BJP's creative social media campaigns included a mock airline ticket for VK Pandian, 'booked' from Bhubaneswar to Tamil Nadu on the fictitious 'BJDGo' airlines for June 4. While the Tamil Nadu born IAS-turned-politician may not leave his 'karmabhoomi' Odisha, he definitely finds himself at a political crossroads following BJD's massive poll debacle — both in the Lok Sabha and assembly polls — in Odisha.

Pandian's much-touted position as a key figure within the BJD has come under scrutiny. The party's disappointing showing has led to speculation about his political trajectory and the impact it may have on his influence within the organization. Pandian had announced he would quit politics if BJD failed to return to power with a three-fourth majority.

He had dared Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan to adopt a similar stand if he lost. If Pandian does that, his political career would span just six months since he joined BJD in Nov last year after taking voluntary retirement from the services. Pandian drew his strength from Naveen Patnaik's unflinching faith in him.

But now, many BJD functionaries who had remained silent may speak out. They may question his acceptability and role within the party. On the eve of the last-phase polls, Naveen had hurriedly announced Pandian will not succeed him.

A new 'pradhan' in Odisha soon?

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During one of his poll rallies in Odisha, Union home minister Amit Shah credited his cabinet colleague Dharmendra Pradhan for leading the team that formed the manifesto for the Odisha assembly elections this time. A few days later, Union defence minister Rajnath Singh indicated a bigger role for Pradhan.

With BJP securing majority to form its first govt in Odisha, Union education minister Pradhan has emerged as the top contender for the CM's job.

Pradhan, 54, a postgraduate from Utkal University has been a key lieutenant of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Shah in the past decade and is BJP's most prominent face in the eastern coastal state.

The manifesto that Shah credited Pradhan with, is one of the key factors that swung the result BJP's way, with its promise of buying paddy at Rs 3,100 per quintal, cash voucher of Rs 50,000 to women under Subhadra Yojana and

fight for Odia asmita. And, it's not just the manifesto. Pradhan joined forces with Modi and Shah to highlight two other issues that provided ammunition in BJP's fight against IAS turned politician VK Pandian as an outsider and the emotive issue of "missing keys" to sacred Ratna Bhandar (treasure trove) at the Puri Jagannath Temple.

Like in 2019, he played the lead role in managing BJP's poll strategy this time too, including overseeing day-to-day affairs in the run-up to polls, apart from drawing up the manifesto.

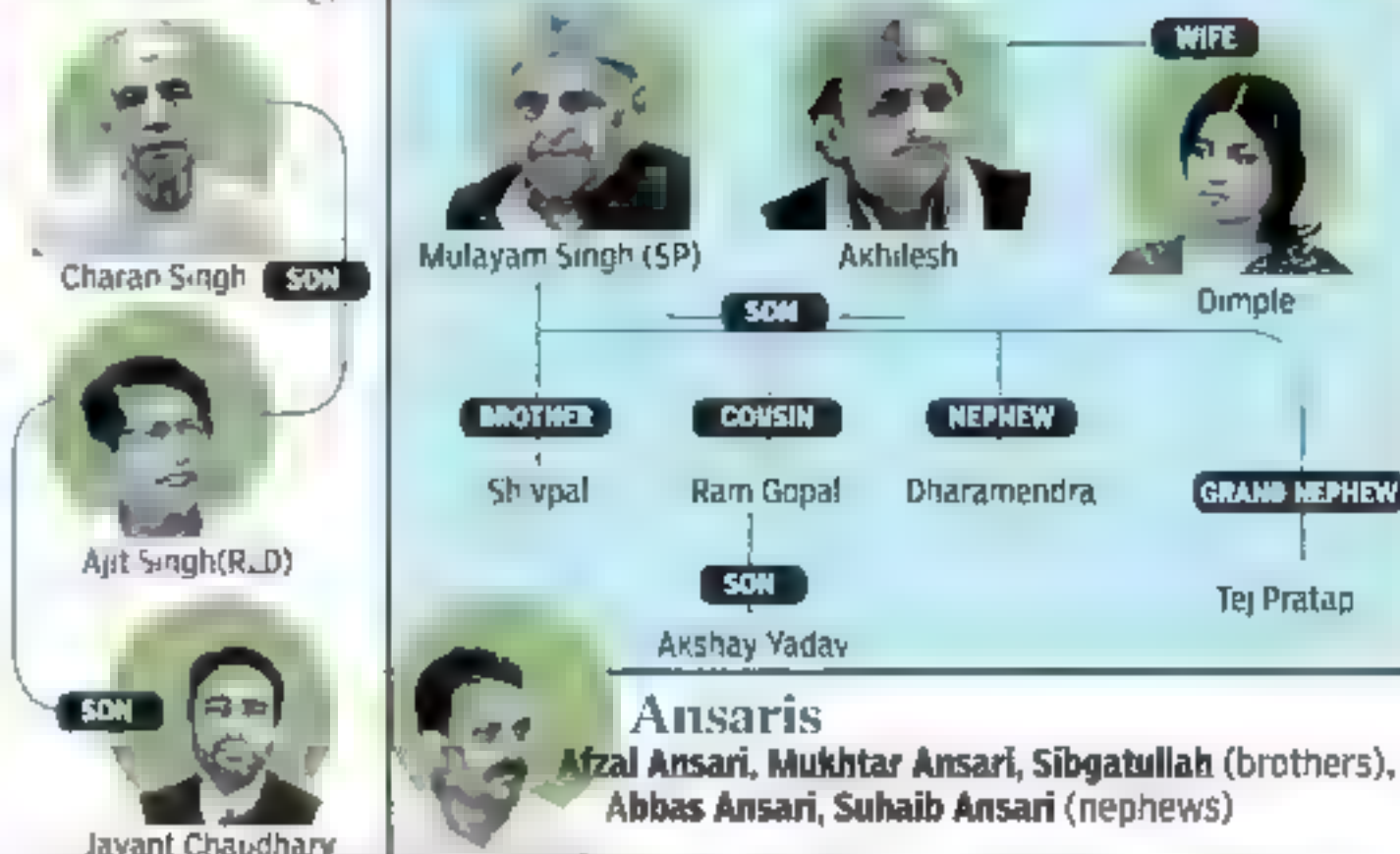
UTTAR PRADESH

Nehru Gandhis



Charan Singh

Yadavs

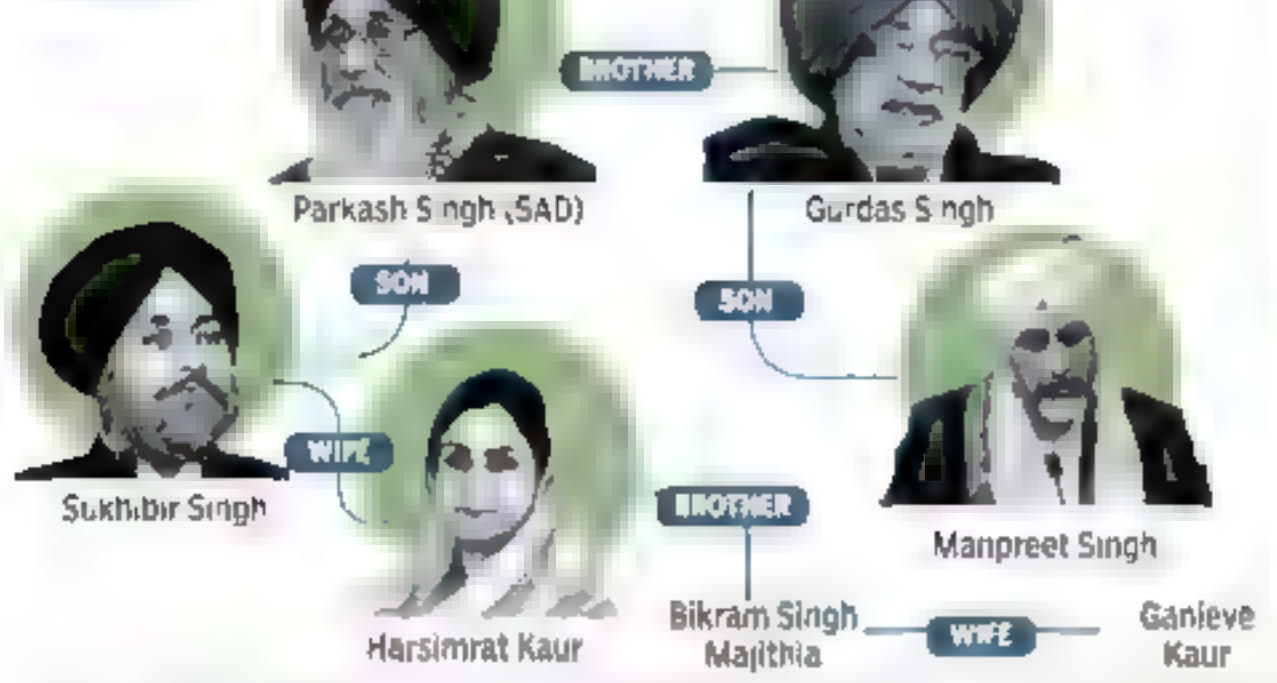


PUNJAB

Royal Family of Patiala

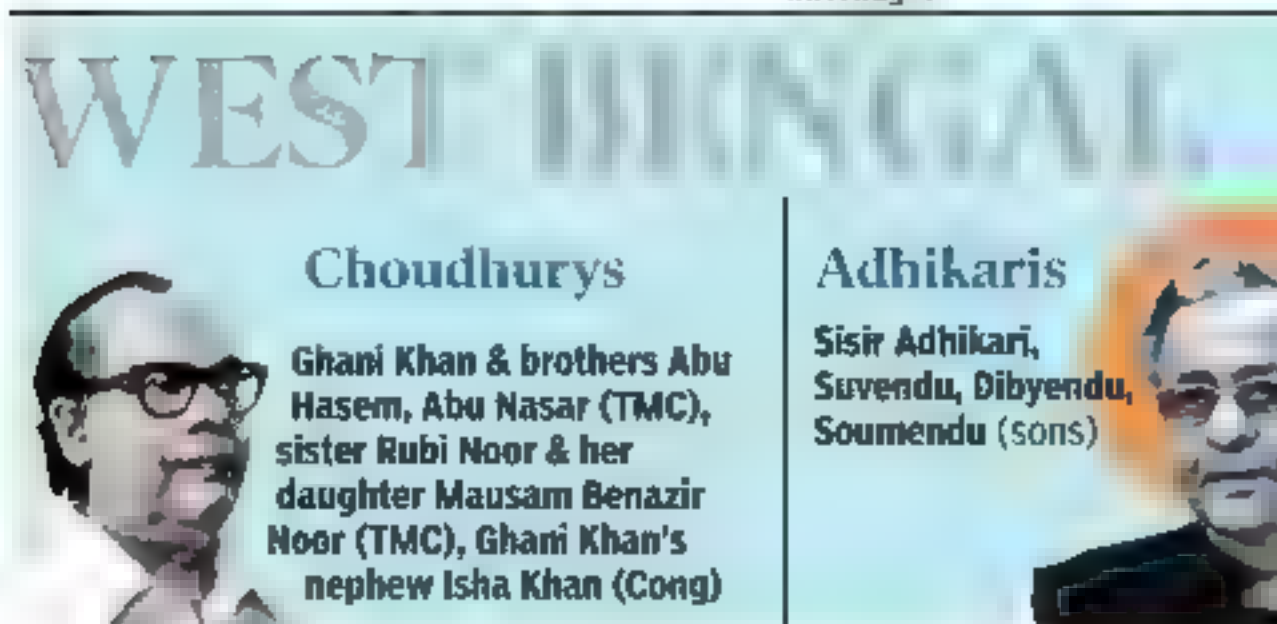
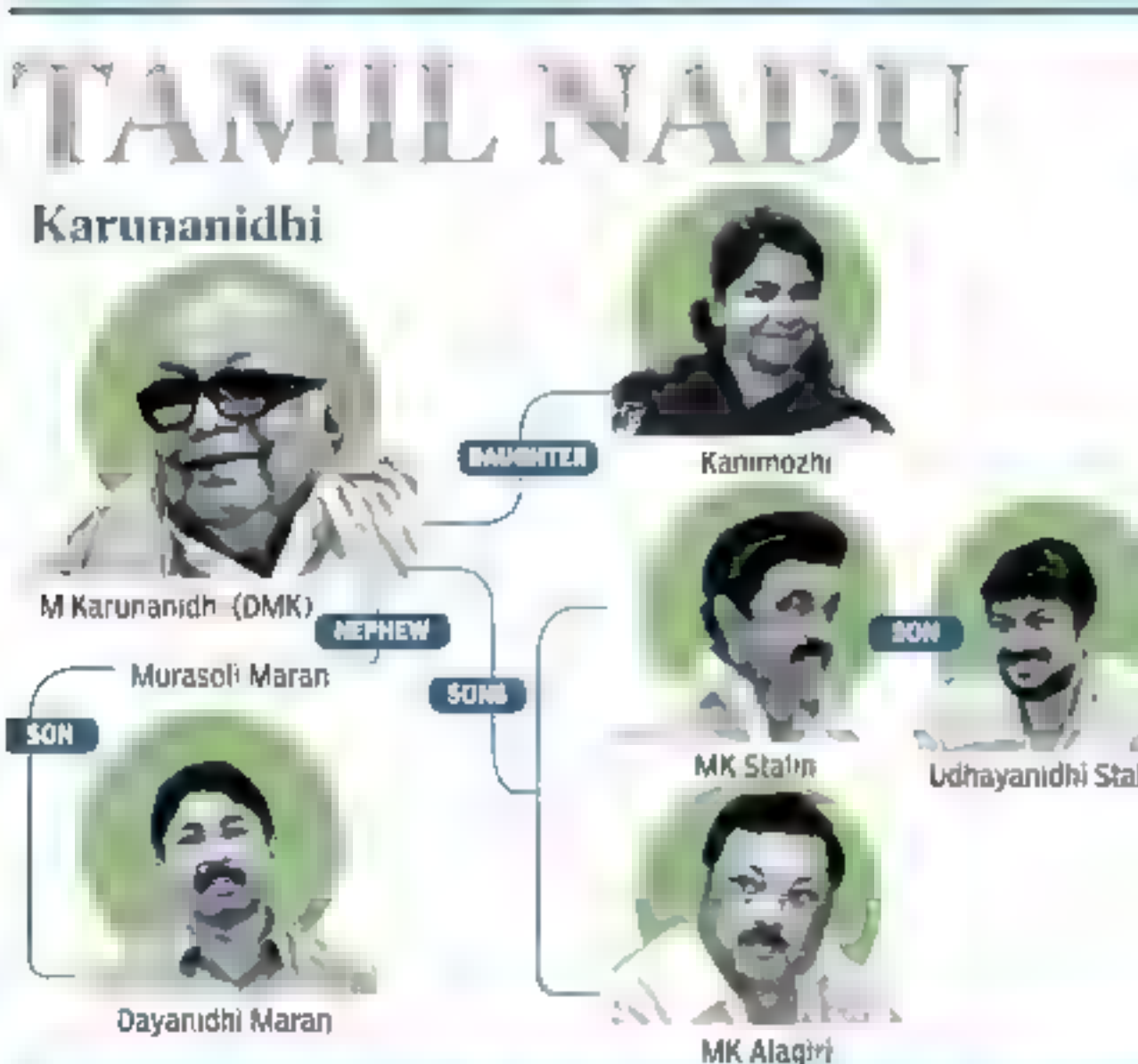
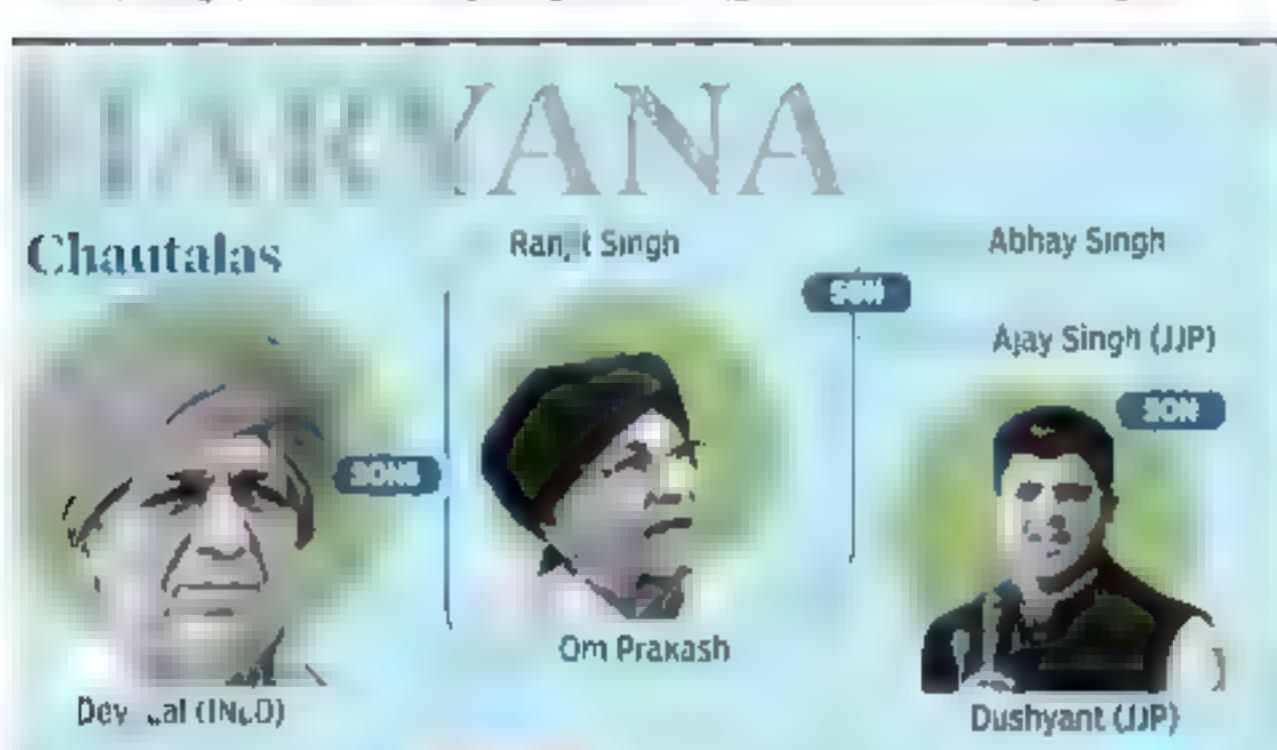


Badals



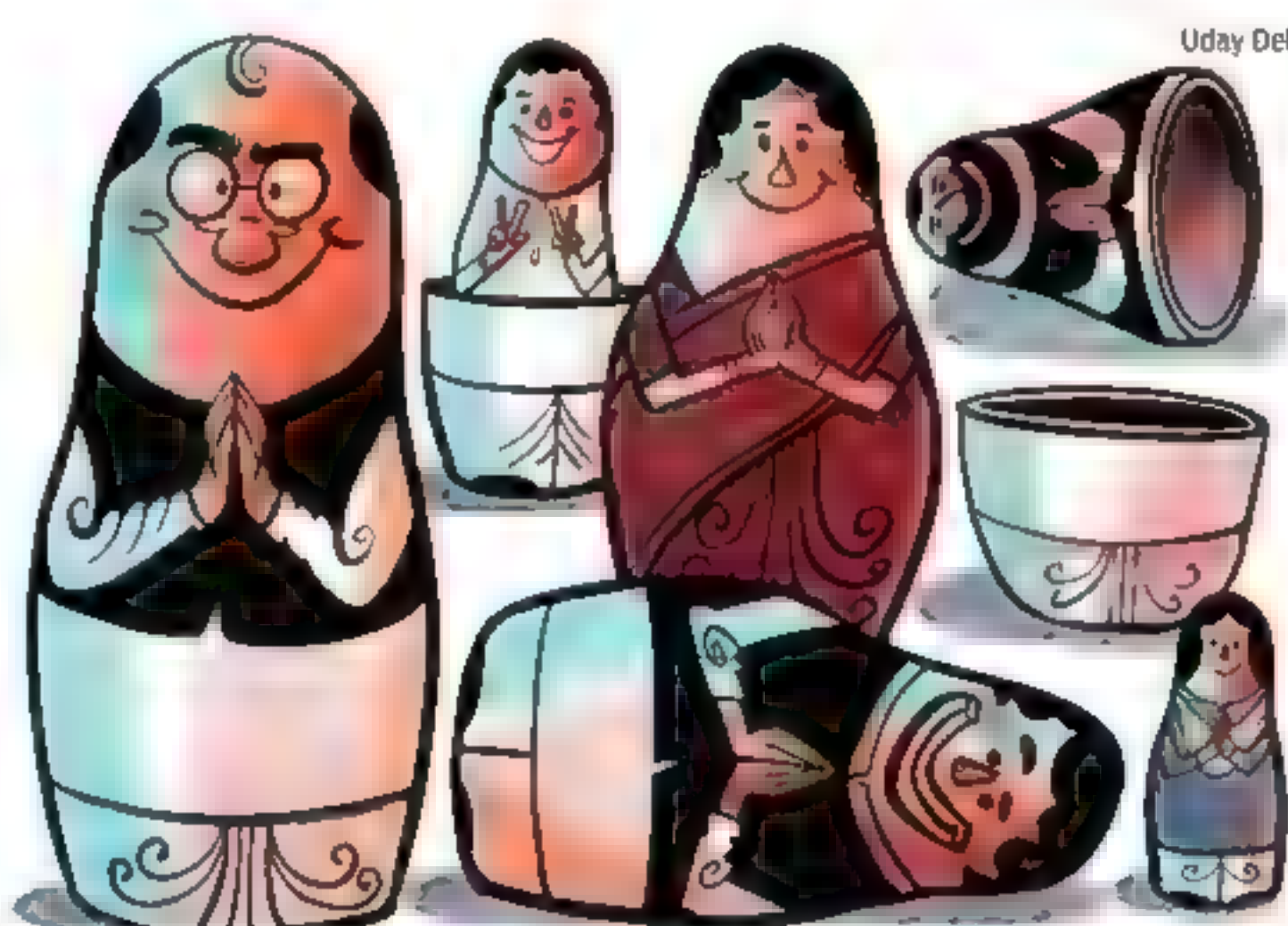
Kairons

Partap Singh Kairon (former CM of Punjab), Surinder Singh Kairon (son of Partap Singh), Adesh Partap Singh Kairon (grand son of Partap Singh)



Parivars in Politics

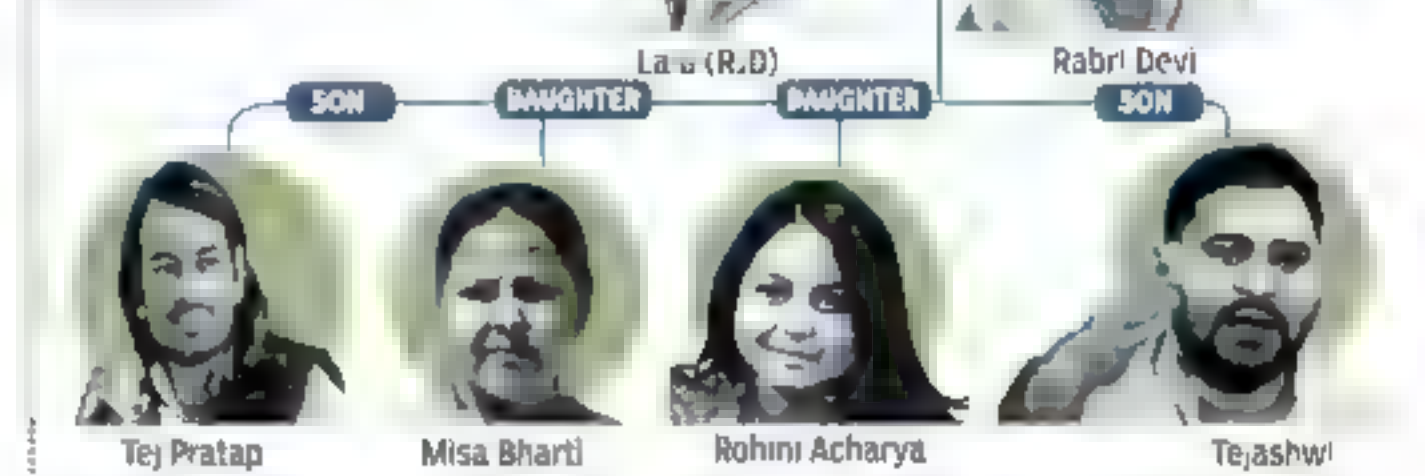
The politics of a country of now 137 crore people has been dominated by a few dynasties. What do Rahul Gandhi, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Nakul Kamal Nath, Sukhbir Badal, Supriya Sule and Vaibhav Gehlot have in common? They represent one of **nearly 75 prominent political families** (and this is not an exhaustive count) across the spectrum – barring the Left – found by **TOI's inhouse research**



All state-level political families and several two-generation families (e.g. Pilots of Rajasthan or Bahugunas of UP) were excluded for reasons of space

BIHAR

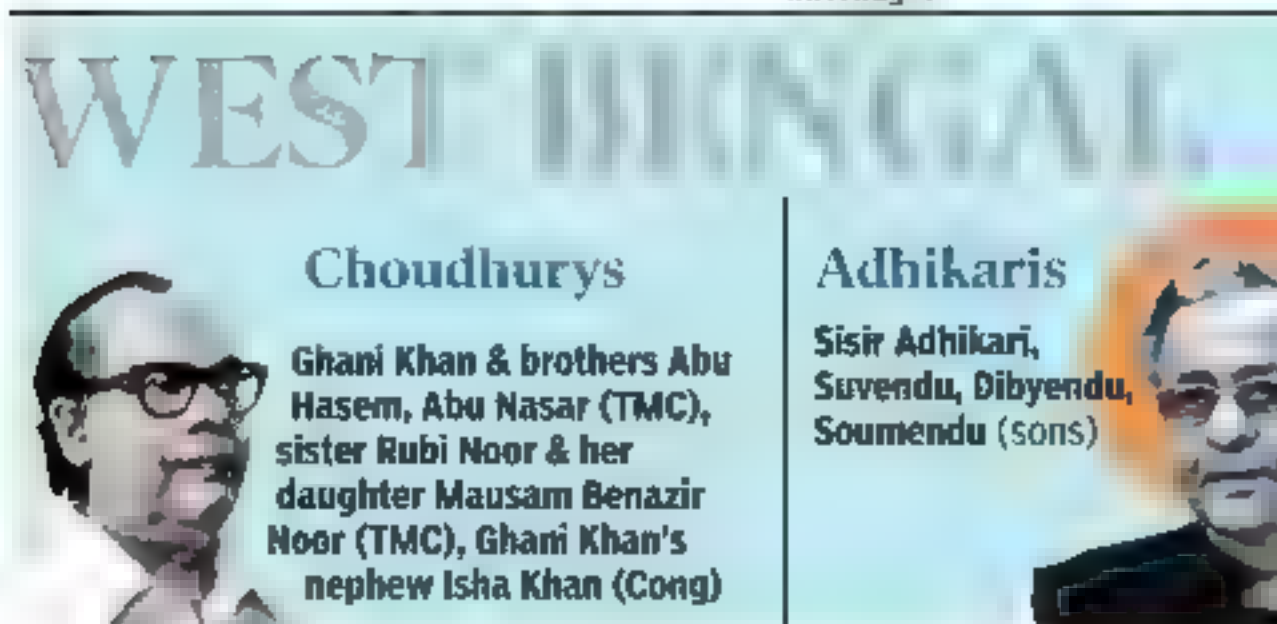
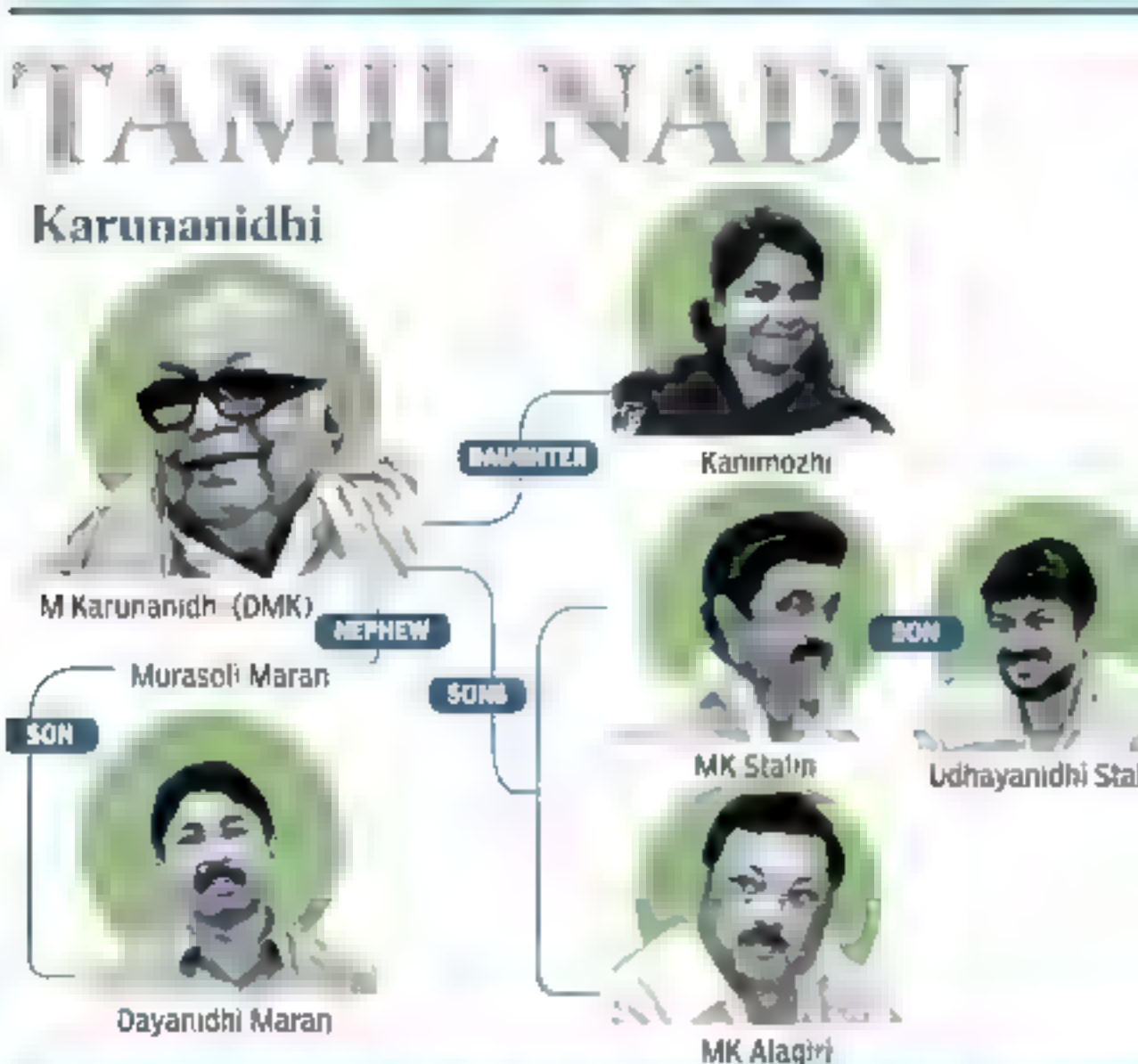
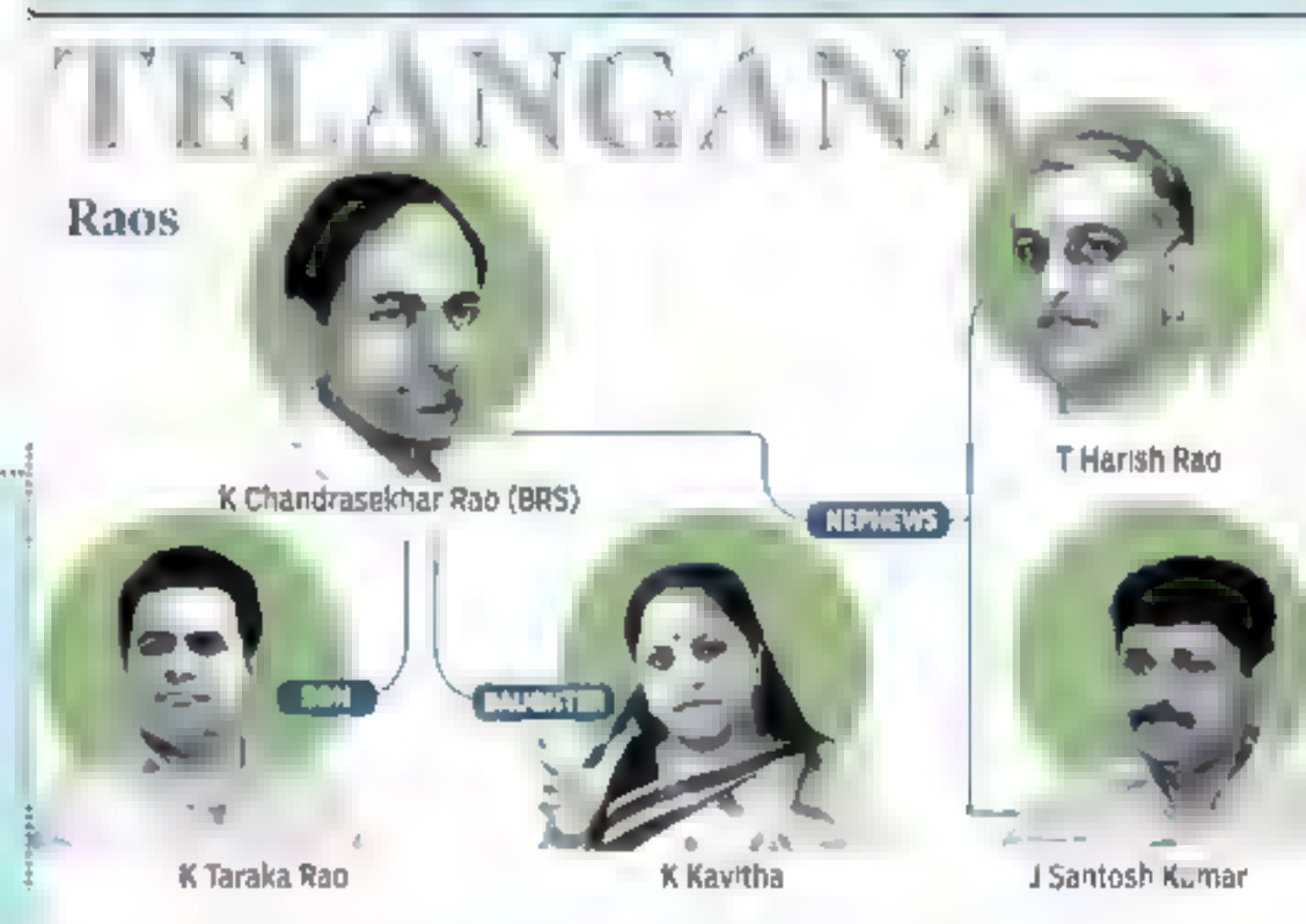
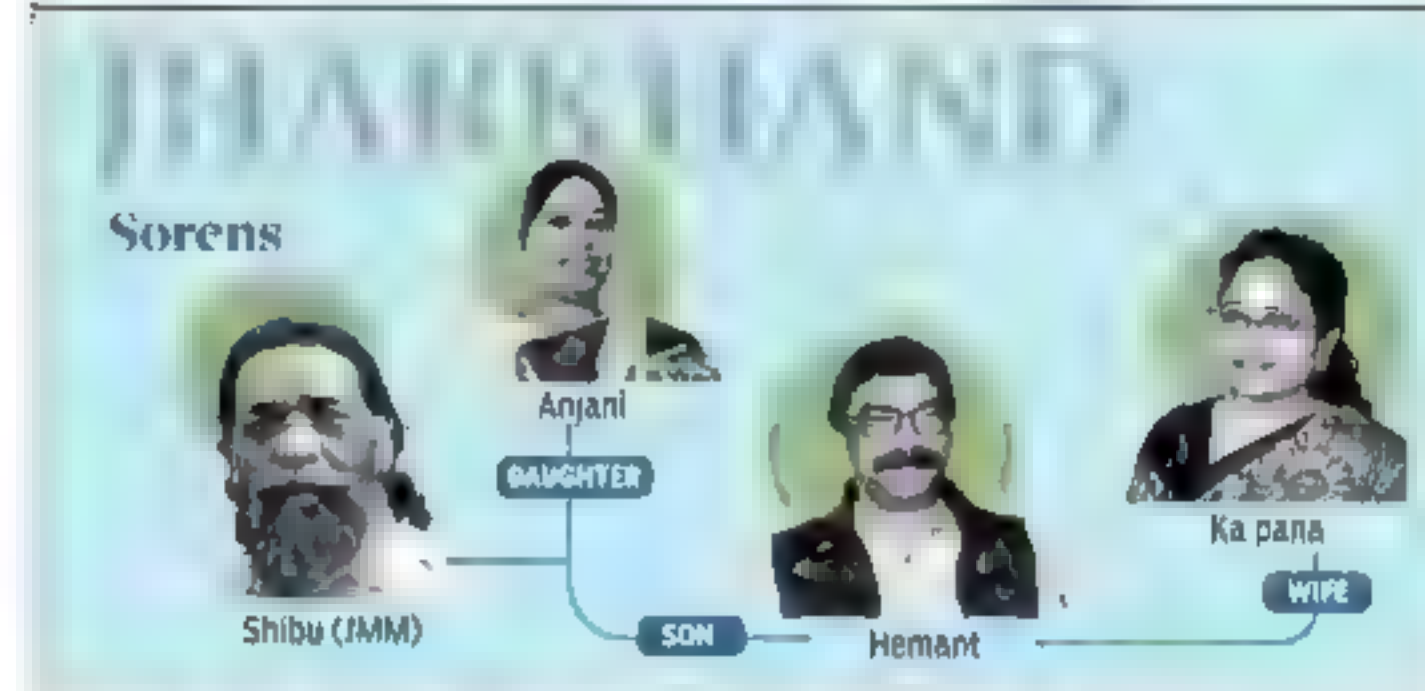
Yadavs



Mishras

Lalit Narayan Mishra, Vijay Kumar Mishra (JDU) son, Jagannath Mishra (Cong), (Brother of Lalit Narayan Mishra), Rishi Mishra (JDU) son of Vijay Kumar Mishra

Paswans





Politics Returns To The Old Normal

BJP's coalition govt must read the verdict right: basics matter

India's voters can't be taken for granted. An election where the outcome was widely held to be a foregone conclusion, has given a result with many surprises, overturning many assumptions. None of the takeaways is brand new to Indian politics. But they were quite unexpected in 2024

End of exceptionalism | After a decade of single-party dominance, which led to successive majority verdicts in elections characterised by a pan-India theme, LS 2024 reverted to an earlier pattern. There wasn't a single overriding issue that animated the electorate. Neither did candidates fade into near-irrelevance in a presidential type of contest. In that sense, LS polls went back to being normal and should lead to the restoration of democracy's checks and balances.

Coalitions and allies matter | This is a natural extension of a return to the old way. Smartly constructed alliances worked well for both BJP and Congress. The best examples for the two parties were AP and UP, respectively. Conversely, avoiding an alliance with BJD in Odisha helped BJP cross a frontier in the state.

For the first time since 2009, a new govt will be a coalition. Unlike the last two occasions, allies cannot be brushed aside. They will have a say in critical decisions. Managing inconsistent demands from allies will be a skill that will have to take centre stage again. Therefore, we are now unlikely to see hugely disruptive decisions introduced at short notice. But that doesn't preclude the likelihood of reforms, as coalition govt's earlier have carried out significant changes.

Messaging and reality need to be in sync | A look back at BJP's campaign shows that the stated target of exceeding 400 seats didn't age well. Not only did it smack of taking the electorate for granted, but it may have also introduced a sense of complacency. Moreover, it provided opposition a tactical opening to stoke anxieties about the Constitution and reservation.

The BJP messaging clearly didn't hit home. GOI's jobs data shows that the benefits of high GDP growth have simply not percolated down. When Modi and BJP talked up their performance, it was out of sync with what the electorate was experiencing. If there's a lesson here, it's that the messaging needs to be close to ground reality. More so, when there's no overriding emotive theme.

INDIA's tactical shrewdness | This was a coalition that seemed to be falling apart in the months leading up to the election. When one of its catalysts, Nitish, suddenly switched over to NDA, it seemed to symbolise the fragility of INDIA. It didn't help that in Bengal TMC chose to go it alone.

Notwithstanding early setbacks, INDIA played its cards well. In UP it defied all odds. A state that was regarded as BJP's trump card turned out to be its weakness. That was the case in Maharashtra too, giving INDIA a huge boost in the two largest states. In both states, the alliance played a tactically smart game. It sidestepped BJP's strength - Modi's popularity - and stuck to local issues. As the campaign progressed, it began to have a more pronounced effect, and eastern UP turned in big gains for SP.

Welfare and jobs | Welfare packages are now fairly standardised across political parties. Cash transfers to women, concessions on electricity consumption and subsidised or even free cereals are common to most manifestos and state govt's. One takeaway from this election is that welfare packages, on their own, do not deliver. One example is AP where YSRCP received a drubbing in assembly and LS elections despite generous welfare measures. Even GOI had an extensive welfare package, underpinned by free cereals since 2020.

Voters have clearly indicated that jobs and economic aspirations matter. India's macroeconomic parameters are sound, and its economy is growing fast. However, unless this translates into greater opportunity for a burgeoning youth population and a belief that upward mobility is within grasp, a party in govt will be in trouble. The economic message from the results is that jobs matter.

New Reality For Modi Sarkar: Play Nice

Lok Sabha elections have given BJP-led NDA a weak mandate to govern. BJP has received its biggest jolt since 2014, having been humbled in its bastion of UP and many other sub-regions of west and north India. It no longer has a majority of its own, brought down by its own hubris. Gains elsewhere were not enough to compensate for the losses in its strongholds.

The second big losers are the exit pollsters, who clearly suffered from confirmation biases and got their numbers badly wrong. In particular, their projections in UP, Maharashtra and Bengal were way off the mark. The other losers are candidates who did not belong to either BJP or opposition alliances. Gains made by INDIA bloc came not just at the cost of BJP but also third party candidates. India has become a two-front polity once more, as it was between 1998 and 2014, even though BJP has expanded its core vote base under Modi.

But the big reality is reputational damage done to Modi. In a party used to giving him all credit for victories in the past, BJP's inability to even get a simple majority of its own cannot but weaken him politically, both inside his own party and in NDA. He cannot now govern with a PMO-centred decision-making apparatus. Of course, there is a chance that many new MPs (and smaller parties) can be enticed into BJP to give it more comfortable numbers in Parliament, but these numbers will be unstable.

Congress and its alliance parties will be cock-a-hoop, having finally broken the jinx of the last decade and scoring wins in many parts of north and west India, including Haryana, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and UP. Mamata Banerjee's TMC has delivered a huge defeat to BJP in Bengal. AAP will be less thrilled, having had to cede seats to its 'ally' Congress in Punjab. A resurgent SP will emerge as a big challenger to BJP in UP, posing problems for the double-engine sarkar.

Consolation prizes for BJP came from Telangana and Odisha. Seat gains in Andhra Pradesh were largely because it made the right decision to ally with TDP and

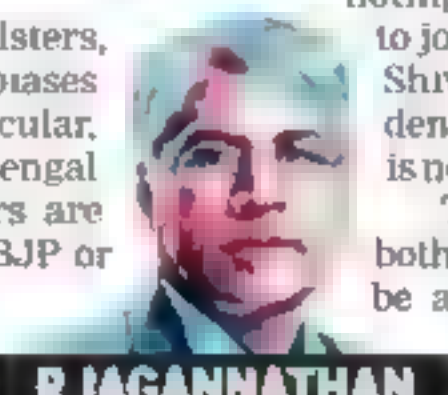
Jana Sena, while mere vote share gains in Kerala and Tamil Nadu suggest that it is still not quite among the top contenders there.

Clearly, BJP was too cocky, but it also made huge errors of commission. While it was quick to grab allies, even by splitting parties, the only ally who won big was Naidu in Andhra along with Jana Sena. It is worth noting that, till the last moment, BJP was hesitant to join this alliance. As for the parties it broke - Shiv Sena and NCP in Maharashtra - this has dented BJP's own credibility. Clearly, electorate is not amused by *lod phod* politics.

The defining trend in this general election, both at Parliament and assembly levels, seems to be anti-incumbency. BJP correctly anticipated that it would need allies this time, but it was too cocksure and took many voter blocs, including the beneficiaries of its welfare schemes, for granted. Incumbents in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh too assumed that they were unbeatable, and here it was BJP and its allies who benefited.

The humbling of BJP in its core areas of strength means that in his third term Modi will have to adjust to the reality of coalition politics. Both Naidu and Nitish will need to be kept in good humour, and major legislative changes cannot be done without a wider consensus not only among allies, but also among opposition. We can forget about One Nation One Poll, Uniform Civil Code and big-ticket economic reforms. Opposition will now be less likely to play dead, both in Parliament and in states.

The lessons BJP needs to learn are many. First, it is wrong to assume that just because Modi is popular, he will always carry the day. India is too diverse and an average voter too independent to allow anyone to rest on his laurels. Every leader, every party



R JAGANNATHAN



has to work hard, and even then victory is not assured. Second, BJP has to build more local leaders, and the decision to sideline someone like Vasundhara Raje in Rajasthan surely cost it big. While UP results suggest that Yogi Adityanath also needs to introspect, many party insiders believe that Yogi may have been circumscribed by higher powers in Delhi who see his rise as a threat to their own standing post-Modi. Third, events like the Ram Mandir *pran* *prathistha* can help the party in a limited way among core voters, but for the wider electorate, bread-and-butter issues matter more. We cannot at this point estimate whether the lack of freebies from BJP - unlike Congress, which has promised the moon to youth and women - cost it many votes. Free ration of 5kg rice clearly was not enough. Jobs may have mattered more this time. In contrast, in 2019, when BJP was uncertain about victory, it made concessions to taxpayers and farmers just before the elections. This time, the party assumed that Modi's guarantee alone would be enough. It wasn't. Fourth, party has to introspect on whether it can afford to base electoral calculations only on a consolidation of Hindu vote. This time, Muslims seem to have fully backed any party capable of beating BJP, and the Hindu counter-consolidation was not as strong. For Congress, the lessons are positive. Its stubborn opposition to BJP has finally paid dividends, and both Rahul Gandhi and his allies, mainly in UP, have reasons to rejoice. Additionally, the old strategy of relying heavily on minority votes and dividing the majority community with sharply targeted welfare schemes has worked this time. But Congress does owe an apology for the kind of calumny it heaped on EC.

Overall, this election proves once more that most elections are won in the states, and not nationally.

Good Democratic Politics: Create Jobs

High on the list of consequences of BJP returning to being dependent on a coalition, rather than having a majority of its own, would be the pressures on the economic front.

Ever since the liberalisation of the 1990s, conventional wisdom has been that economic policy needs to focus entirely on growth. Economists associated with govt have often explicitly argued that inequality does not matter as long as there is sufficient growth to take the poor above the poverty line. The 2024 general election results provide the first concrete challenge to that view.

The idea that high growth would provide the resources to take care of the interests of those at the base of the pyramid did not begin with BJP govt's. It gathered momentum with the decision of UPA 1 to launch the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme. BJP provided further impetus to this approach by using the revenue from unequal growth to provide free food and other welfare measures.

This approach did bring an increasing share of Indians above the poverty line defined by economists, but the poverty line in the minds of the poor began to change. As the country celebrated extremely high levels of consumption, it raised the aspirations of those at the bottom of the pyramid.

Rahul Gandhi, in his first successful political initiative, spotted the dissatisfaction with the measures that merely raised the poor above the poverty line. The guarantees of Congress went far beyond tackling absolute poverty. He not only promised higher cash transfers

but, in states like Karnataka, the idea of free bus travel for women dramatically altered their relationship with the world outside their homes.

The promises of INDIA have not been enough to remove PM Modi and his politics of majority dominance at home and Indian dominance of the world but the performance of the alliance suggests that the rising aspirations of the poor can no longer be easily brushed



aside. The next BJP govt will be under pressure to, if not match some of the cash transfers that INDIA promised, at least make economic policy more sensitive to inequality.

To begin with, the dependence on regional party allies could well result in regional inequality gaining more attention than it has had in decades. The growth-with-inequality strategy led to the creation of a few metropolises that were too expensive to house less skilled labour and their families.

This resulted in the workers being forced to migrate for short-term assignments in the city while keeping their families in their villages. Their efforts to earn in cities so that they could spend in villages took a toll on their health and family lives. This cost was accepted as the earnings from the city changed their status in the village. Once their status changed, though, they wanted jobs closer to their homes. Unemployment became an issue that affected their votes.

Addressing the unemployment challenge has been made more difficult by the political narrative that emerged from the growth-with-inequality strategy. The welfare measures it used to offset the political costs of the strategy created their own narrative. These measures were seen as an individual's right, which had to be protected by govt. The impression was thus easily created that the jobs that were being promised would be govt jobs.

The expectation of govt jobs may well encourage regional allies to

demand large payouts from the Centre. It does not help that BJP govt would be dependent on support from Naidu and Nitish, both of whom represent states that have long-standing demands from Centre. Andhra Pradesh had been promised a substantial grant when the original state was divided, and Bihar had been promised a special grant. These grants could generate govt jobs, but they would fall far short of the numbers needed to make a serious dent in unemployment.

Beyond the quick fixes of central grants, the challenge of employment generation would require a fresh look at investment strategies. The current emphasis on attracting global capital, or Indian capital with a global presence, may not be effective, as this capital tends to prefer economies dominated by larger metropolises. The two states that have gained political significance from the 2024 election results - Andhra Pradesh and Bihar - do not have any of the country's major metropolises in them.

It may be time to consider alternative patterns of industrialisation that are not only more effective in generating employment but can also be located at urban centres that are more hospitable to less skilled workers. Such an approach may also require greater reliance on the accumulation of local capital, rather than depending on attracting capital from outside. If the results of 2024 do generate such an alternative economic strategy, the return of coalitions may not be such a bad outcome.



NARENDAR PANI

Back To Practical Hinduism

Just as pundits settled into the comfort of magical thinking - faith in Modi's charisma and grand national narratives - India's voters have given us a lesson in political realism. While the digital classes in Delhi and Bengal cheered the moon landing and the G20 summit, and the magnates in Gujarat celebrated the temple in Ayodhya, other matters have been on the minds of people in deep India.

India's swelling GDP and its new status as the world's fifth largest economy have been closely tracked by soaring unemployment, which has risen from 3.2% to 7.6% since 2013. This contrast reflects the gulf between the benefits of Modi's economics for the rich and the poor.

India's banks are no longer crippled by bankrupt billionaires, foreign investment has acquired confidence. While physical and digital infra, from airports to the digitisation of money, have expanded, life choices of the country's poorest and most vulnerable have shrunk. Crores of India's farmers and migrant workers have been left behind.

Lakhs of small and tiny, often grey market, businesses that run day-to-day India and form the country's economic backbone, are still recovering from demonetisation and GST policies. The small enterprise sector has shrunk to

19% of India's GDP, from 27.5% pre-Modi. While inflation soars, there has hardly been any growth in real wages since 2014 and the share of educated young people among the unemployed rose from 54.2% to 65.7% over the two Covid years.

Manufacturing growth is painstakingly slow, agri profits have fallen precipitously, private consumption expenditure descended to a two-decade low, while household debt rose to an all time high. According to World Inequality Database, India's economic inequality is worse than it has been in a century.

While pundits brooded over political messaging and national ideologies, predicting a Modi 4-eva govt, voters in the fields and on the streets were rethinking their loyalties. Modi rode high on hope with two wildcards he received in the previous elections. This year, he was judged less on his promises than on what he has already done.

The verdict does not only damn Modinomics, it drastically cuts his image to size. Ensclosed in a bubble of media pundits, political technologists and sycophants, critics say the PM has become an auto-devotee, believing himself divinely ordained to lead single-handedly the new Bharat. Ignoring local leaders, failing to reward veteran party workers and sidelining

ANASTASIA PILIAVSKY

RSS have cost the party dozens of seats. Seats won in UP, Kerala, Odisha and Rajasthan went to known and trusted community leaders, not Modi's envoys.

Modi's polarising comments, arguably made when he realised this election will not be an easy ride, may have backfired, leaving many Hindus unimpressed. "India does not need to talk of Hindus and Muslims," says a *chaiwallah* in Jaipur. "We need roads and jobs."

In a survey conducted across Indian cities, 35% of BJP supporters said they had no interest in Ayodhya. Even the middle-class Hindu women, who, as the keepers of faith, are more susceptible to Hindu nationalism, joined the party mostly through economic self-help groups, not theological associations.

Once again, India rejected totalising, abstract national ideologies, proving its politics to be as local, pragmatic and pluralistic as the Hinduism actually practised by most. Its political judgments have proven more agile and self-possessed than any sitting room analyst's.



Heartland's Caste Consensus

Lok Sabha results show caste retains its salience in north Indian politics - but in new, unpredictable ways. Before examining what's new, a look at what lingers from the past. One, dominant castes of north India continue to strongly prefer BJP, which remains a Brahmin-Bania party at the core.

Second, peasant groups in UP and Bihar still prefer regional OBC-led parties. Third, Dalit voters continue to be split between the incumbent in New Delhi and small regional parties.

But beyond these, much has changed. BJP has shown over the past decade that it can create broad-based caste coalitions threading together the top, middle, and bottom of Hindu society. Rajputs and Jats and OBC-SC/ST voters endorsed Modi

as *primus inter pares*. This was more than social engineering. Long-standing blocs of *jatis* could be disaggregated, and recombined into successful electoral coalitions. Both winners and losers in electoral politics would receive the same spoils of state welfare as the

labharthi (beneficiaries). As India experimented with universal welfare, more and more *jatis* could be enticed onto the merry-go-round.

But if BJP could do it, so could opposition. In UP, particularly in its central and eastern flanks, SP abandoned its focus on Yadavs and Muslims, to award seats to Dalits according to its PDA *pichda* (backward), Dalit, *alpa sankhya* (minority) - strategy. Many Jatavs, Mayawati's supporters for over three decades, credibly believed a 'danger to the Constitution' obliged them to vote against BJP. As a result, BSP drew a blank even in western UP.

Anti-BJP votes consolidated behind INDIA parties. Just as a broad neo-Hindutva coalition worked for BJP, a new socialism (*samajwadi*) rooted in the messy everyday realities of caste and class spelt success for the SP-led INDIA coalition in UP.

In Bihar alliances of middle and lower castes have kept Lalu and Nitish in power since 1990. Yet the BJP-JDU coalition signalled a new trend: Brahmins, Bhumihars, and Rajputs could, after decades, band with Kurmis, Koeris, and Kushwahas. With Paswan's LJP joining NDA, a significant proportion of SC votes consolidated behind the neo-Hindutva coalition.

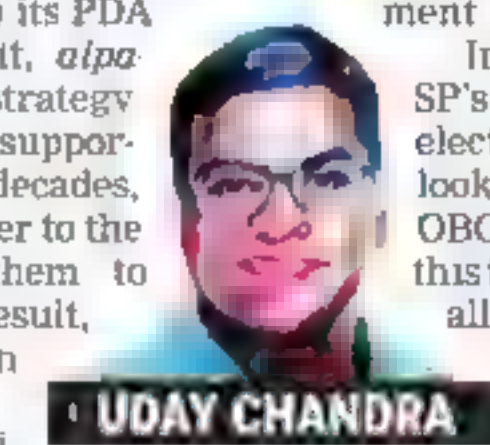
In practice, this is a shifting social kaleidoscope more than a coalition

when the wily Nitish left NDA to join hands with RJD and Congress in the state, a caste census and a new welfare drive emerged. Every time he returned to NDA, predictably before national elections, he ensured BJP voters rallied behind JDU candidates, and boosted his party's tally in Parliament.

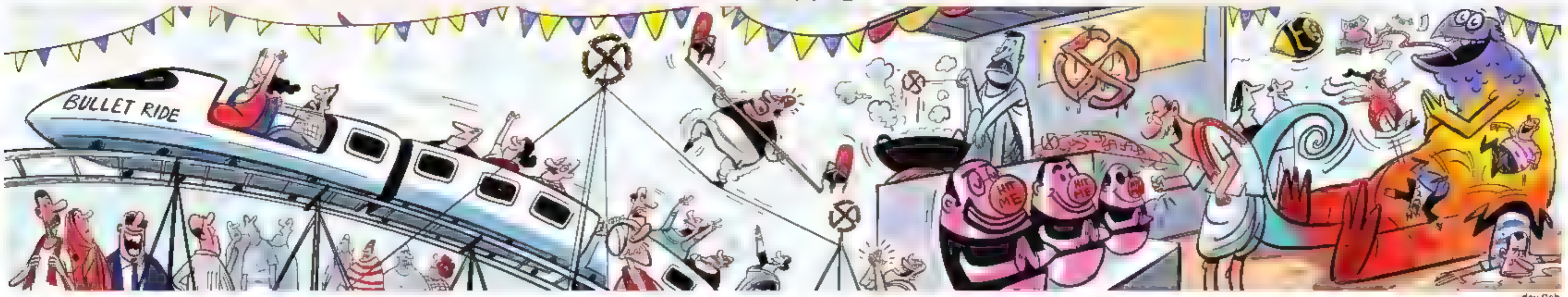
In Bihar RJD will learn from SP's successes in UP. With state elections next year, Tejashwi will look to woo Dalits and non-Yadav OBCs, who may have voted NDA this time. But for now, RJD and its allies have fared poorly. JDU has recorded its best LS performance since 2009, emerging as Bihar's single-largest party.

But if Nitish now rejoins INDIA, he can end his political career with a top position in Delhi, leaving next year's assembly elections as a tantalising bipolar contest between BJP and RJD.

Universal welfare being the new normal in India, savvy voters are choosing carefully between coalitions of Hindutva and *samajwadi*, that offer new public goods. The underserved citizens of India's northern heartland stand to gain after decades of neglect. Each alliance will woo citizens with higher bids in exchange for votes. A world of possibility lies ahead as the north seeks to catch up with the south.



UDAY CHANDRA



Why Modi Doesn't Really Need A Makeover

Over the years, there have been new layers of conventional wisdom that have shaped the punditry on Indian elections. The first, which has been demonstrated at frequent intervals since the landmark 1977 elections, is that the term 'safe seat' is a misnomer in India. The second, also demonstrated over many decades, is that the accuracy of opinion polls is suspect. This election, exit polls have joined this list of non-certainties.

Premature triumphalism | It's one thing for a prematurely triumphalist BJP leadership to proclaim its intention of breaching the 400-seat barrier in Lok Sabha – a feat that was only once possible in 1984, and that too under exceptional circumstances.

It's, however, a different matter to anticipate how the prospect of a steamroller majority after two terms is going to be viewed by the electorate. Maybe the governing dispensation was misled by the series of opinion polls that suggested a presidential election with one candidate on the ballot. Maybe the expectations of markets were shaped by the optimism of exit polls that

suggested an all India wave for Modi.

Whatever the reality, it was a Black Tuesday for the investing classes, and a grim reality check for BJP activists who had set out in the morning in a celebratory mood.

Stability falls short | Over the past 10 years, since Modi assumed charge, India had got accustomed to not merely stability but dissension-free decision-making at Centre.

By depriving BJP of an outright parliamentary majority on its own and yet giving NDA a comfortable working majority, voters appear to have shunned the decisiveness and certitudes that had become a feature of Modi govt. They have, instead, opted for a greater measure of hesitation and tentativeness, but without embracing the dysfunctionality of India.

Whether this was just a wake-up call to consider the interests of those unable to keep pace with the pace of Viksit Bharat or a larger philosophical message celebrating a plodding approach will have to be assessed by Modi as he looks to begin his third term on a subdued note. How he and his brains-trust assess the election outcome will have a bearing on the immediate future.

Yet, for BJP, the election was only a partial disaster. It failed to cross the 272-majority mark because of reverses in UP, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Maharashtra.

In the first three states, it was a failure of governance and an inability to address the concerns of dominant castes and Dalits.

In Maharashtra, the bid to ensure victory by decimating opposition triggered a moral repugnance that a crafty leader like Sharad Pawar was able to use to his advantage.

Corrective: Soft touch | The impression of high handedness and arrogance doesn't appear to have served BJP well in this election and Modi will have to think about a corrective soft touch.

This will also have to involve BJP state units reverting to normal politics and becoming less dependent on investigative agencies.

These distortions must, however, be kept in perspective. Overall, BJP's performance in its other stronghold areas of northern and western India was exemplary. Its ambition of making a mark in non-traditional areas didn't entirely succeed in Tamil Nadu, but who could have anticipated the scale of BJP success in Telangana, Odisha and its ability to finally dent the bipolar consensus of Kerala?



Tanuj Kulkarni

Build on Modi Guarantees | There was disappointment in Bengal, a state where Modi had put in an extra effort. However, the defeat hasn't been at a level to warrant abandoning the project altogether.

Organisational overhaul, a clear line of leadership, and a more culturally nuanced approach could prove to be rewarding for 2026 assembly elections.

The point is that while the Modi Guarantees may have been overwhelmed by the fragmentation of politics in some states, the narrative still holds good in most of the country. Modi remains by far the most popular and acceptable leader, and it's unlikely that BJP will even consider replacing him with someone who appears more consensual.

Even though some of the more radical facets of his agenda will probably have to be put on the backburner, Modi will be misreading the verdict if he chooses to reinvent himself dramatically.

He will be confronted by an energised Congress ecosystem that wants to go for BJP's jugular. Media too will become less friendly, if not hostile.

This isn't an unfamiliar situation. He faced similar challenges as Gujarat CM. How he converts threats into opportunities will channel the nation's attention in the coming months.

Elections That Reminded Netas, People Are The Boss

The historic mandate that the exit polls had predicted for BJP on Saturday didn't come through on Tuesday. And, given that BJP has fallen short of a simple majority, all bets about the new govt's agenda are now off. Because when BJP does form govt, it would be in a coalition where its power is much diminished. Which would mean a diminishing of both party ability to run political manoeuvres and govt ability to make unilateral decisions.

Where BJP has scored | While BJP has taken a massive loss in seats across core states, it has by and large held on to its vote share, and continues its domination of some states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Plus, it has managed to expand its footprint in 'new' states such as Odisha, while also increasing its vote share in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It has performed well with allies in Bihar, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

Why the setbacks | There is no single theory that can explain all of BJP's setbacks, as different states have gone in different directions.

● In Maharashtra and UP its alliance math went wrong, while INDIA stole the march.

● In Haryana, there was anti-incumbency; in Rajasthan, internal dissension took a toll. Along with Punjab, these were also farmer-protest affected areas.

● Overall, the party's electoral dominance has taken a hit. Its forward march in Bengal has been stalled for a few more years.

Whither the Modi factor? | BJP's brawny dominance has hitherto been over-dependent on PM's popularity. But this time, his leadership hasn't been able to mobilise the votes quite as robustly. This is not to argue that the PM's appeal doesn't matter for the party's performance, but rather that it has to square off with voters' perception of governance, political freedoms, and economic anxiety.

Is BJP's social coalition weakening? | Certainly, the cracks are beginning to show. In UP, for instance, losses seem to have mounted more in SC-dominated

seats than in Muslim dominated seats, as BSP has been wiped out. Economic anxiety has obviously also taken a toll on its support. Joblessness, in particular, has been a factor costing the youth vote. It is worth underlining now that rations and such kind of welfare can only keep a person or a voter happy for so long – though some of these factors did not mar the party's prospect in many states, including neighbouring Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

Has overconfidence hurt the party? | Many voters did come to associate slogans like 'Ab ki baar 400 paar' with overconfidence and maybe arrogance. This may also have impacted turnout while the aggregate turnout may have remained the same, the composition of those who stayed away from the polling booth could have affected the results significantly. It could be that committed BJP voters became overconfident and stayed at home on voting day. For the fence-sitter who sways its way, it could be apathy that kept them home. And the impact of it all would have mounted if Congress-leaning voters sensed this was an existential moment for them, and therefore mobilised powerfully.

Is BJP itself tiring? | This is an organisation with a famously well-oiled election machine. But there are signs that the grease is wearing thin in some parts. A sense of having achieved ideological hegemony could also be hurting its cadre's drive. This is also indicated by the loss of the Faizabad parliamentary constituency, which includes the Ayodhya assembly segment. Is it that Hindutva may now be paying retreating dividends?

Many turncoats were nominated, higher renominations increasing local anti-incumbency chances, and overall ticket distribution likely went awry, particularly

in UP and Rajasthan.

So, what now? | It could be that the Modi-Shah combine will no longer dictate cabinet nominations, as new pressure points take shape. RSS-BJP relationship too could see important shifts. There will also be worry within BJP regarding the states that are going to hold assembly polls later this year – Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand. Because in all these states, the party's LS performance has been poor.

Of course, this time around, BJP will be much more dependent on its allies. An expansionist BJP with ever rising ambitions had made various allies quite unhappy. But now, it is very possible that some of the same allies will start demanding, and getting, their pound of flesh. This may also have significant implications for governance. For example, the party's big-ticket agenda items like One Nation One Election and Uniform Civil Code may have to be put on the backburner.

Finally, the 2024 LS result shows that India very much remains a competitive electoral democracy, where voters continue to signal an evaluation of govt performance. Elections in this country have always worked as a corrective mechanism. And this time they have underlined that no majority is permanent.

Why Congress Is Back But Isn't Quite There Yet

The big story of this election, arguably, has been the budding revival of Congress as a national force. We can take three preliminary indicators.

The first is the near doubling of its seat share, almost reaching the three-figure mark. If we chart Congress's seat share over the last four decades, from 1984 onwards, we see a story of a secular decline. Only on two previous occasions has Congress's seat share increased by over 40 seats (1991 and 2009).

The second is the jump in vote share by about 3 percentage points even though the party contested 83 fewer seats this time. At 32%, it was also the only time it contested on fewer than 400 constituencies. Extrapolating vote share on seats contested, Congress's vote share would rival its previous highwater mark of 2009, when it garnered 29% votes.

Third, Congress has regained a footing in party strongholds where it had been wiped out over the last decade. These include Maharashtra's Vidarbha belt, UP's Awadh region, north-central Karnataka, Telangana, and parts of north-eastern Rajasthan.

Six battleground states powered its resurgence. Congress won 49 seats here, where it had won just six in 2019 – Maharashtra (13), Karnataka (9), Haryana (5), UP (6), Rajasthan (8) and Telangana (8).

So, what worked for Congress?

Collaboration | Alliance-centric strategy, where the party, much like in 2004, projected itself as the nucleus of a larger opposition. In UP, for example, it was happy to play second fiddle to SP, helping it shore up its backward caste base for the alliance. In Rajasthan, similarly, it gave space to smaller Jat and tribal-centric parties, RJP and BAP, both of which won their seats and pushed up Congress's fortunes in neighbouring constituencies.

Message | The party's narrative articulated a vision that exploited BJP govt's vulnerability. An agenda of social justice, of protecting the Constitution and advancing the caste census, appears to have worked, especially among Dalits, who've returned to the party.

Rahul had sounded the poll bugle in his Nagpur rally, on Congress's foundation day on Dec 28 last year, where he set the campaign narrative of fighting BJP's ideology of 'raja-maharaja' with the ideology of Constitution-based social justice – framing the party as representing 90% of India. Kharage's leadership also helped the party insofar as it could project a national Dalit face. In UP, Congress played no small role in building a bridge for Dalits to cross over to Akhilesh's SP.

Rural support | Congress's credible performance in semi-rural and rural districts can also be credited to its central focus on farmer distress and wealth concentration. This helped the party garner significant support among agrarian castes such as Jats. Congress has swept the Jat belt in Haryana for the first time since 2009. And perhaps also for the first time since the 1990s, Congress has managed to stitch a winning umbrella alliance in parts of Rajasthan – a Jat-Meena-Gujjar-Dalit alliance.

Where did Congress fail again?

Hindi heartland | It is still weak in large swathes of the Hindi heartland and eastern India, where it used to be the

largest party a generation or so back. It got wiped out, or nearly wiped out, once again in MP, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Odisha and Bengal. The party won only four seats here. It had won six in 2019.

Tribal hurdle | Despite Rahul's second Bharat Jodo Nyay yatra, which aimed to boost Congress's base among tribal voters, it fared poorly in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Assam, all en route the yatra. Indifference of tribal voters to the party's nyay (social justice) platform should be a serious source of concern for the party.

What does the future hold for the party?

Opportunity | There's much potential for Congress to build on the momentum from this election. Congress alliance would arguably start as favourite for the three state assembly elections in a few months in Maharashtra, Haryana and Jharkhand. Maharashtra offers the party opportunity to regain its traditional strong hold, and perhaps somewhat replenish its empty coffers.

Haryana would provide it the best opportunity since 2018 to defeat BJP in a straight contest in the Hindu belt.

Jharkhand could help the party win back its tribal support.

Implosion of parties such as YSRCP in Andhra and BJD in Odisha opens a critical window of opportunity for Congress to regain space in these states by staking claim as the second pole of state politics.

Threats | Absence of structural reforms in the fossilised party bureaucracy, ageing leadership in states, and weak central authority are serious threats. The Udaipur roadmap of democratising the party and opening it up to fresher cohorts of younger leaders has been honoured more in its breach.

Congress is still unable to attract backward castes and tribal voters in north-central and eastern India, without which it would struggle to regain its halcyon days.

The present verdict can only be termed a budding revival. The Grand Old Party has only caught a spark, but it would need to conscientiously follow a clear roadmap towards revival to ensure lasting gains.

Videos Told The Story: It's Not One Nation, One Pole

Six months ago, this election was a done deal. Then something changed. It didn't happen overnight, but gradually disenchantment against govt began to surface in pockets. The most striking change that we saw this time around was the organic appearance of an independent ecosystem of voices.

Dhruv Rathee perhaps single-handedly acted as the spearhead of the opposition's communication efforts, without being formally aligned with any party. That he managed to garner between 35-40m views for some of his videos is a sign of the tremendous impact he had on voters.

In a peculiar reversal of sorts, the decreasing credibility of all institutions, in particular media, has led to a search for non-institutional voices. There was a time when we looked for institutional certification in order to believe in something, now it seems to be the opposite. Any intermediary institution, no matter how powerful, is viewed with suspicion given the feeling that they all have been penetrated by the current power structure.

This election result has surprises for everyone. The biggest victors of this election are the regional parties. Between them, TDP, DMK,

TMC, SP and JDU have performed outstandingly well. UP held the biggest surprise of the elections, with SP winning more seats than BJP. BJP performed below expectations in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Bengal too and failed to make headway in Tamil Nadu.

For Congress, the results, though not definitive, are a lifeline, an affirmation that the party still has something to offer voters. Rahul Gandhi has redeemed himself to a large extent, by campaigning tirelessly and holding the coalition together.

BJP too has some reason to cheer. It has performed outstandingly well in Odisha. In terms of vote share, it has also made a dent in the south.

But overall, this is a significant defeat for the party. Under Modi it is not designed to work in a coalition, and its ideological project is unlikely to get carried out in the changed circumstances. And Nitish and Chandrababu are hardly reliable allies.

The election has a few important lessons that are worth heeding. At its most fundamental level, the verdict has spoken against the idea of a monolithic consolidation of power. The idea of one nation, one party, one religion, and one leader has been

shunned. In a sense, it is not as much a vote against Hindutva as it is against any attempt to homogenise the country into any single way of thinking.

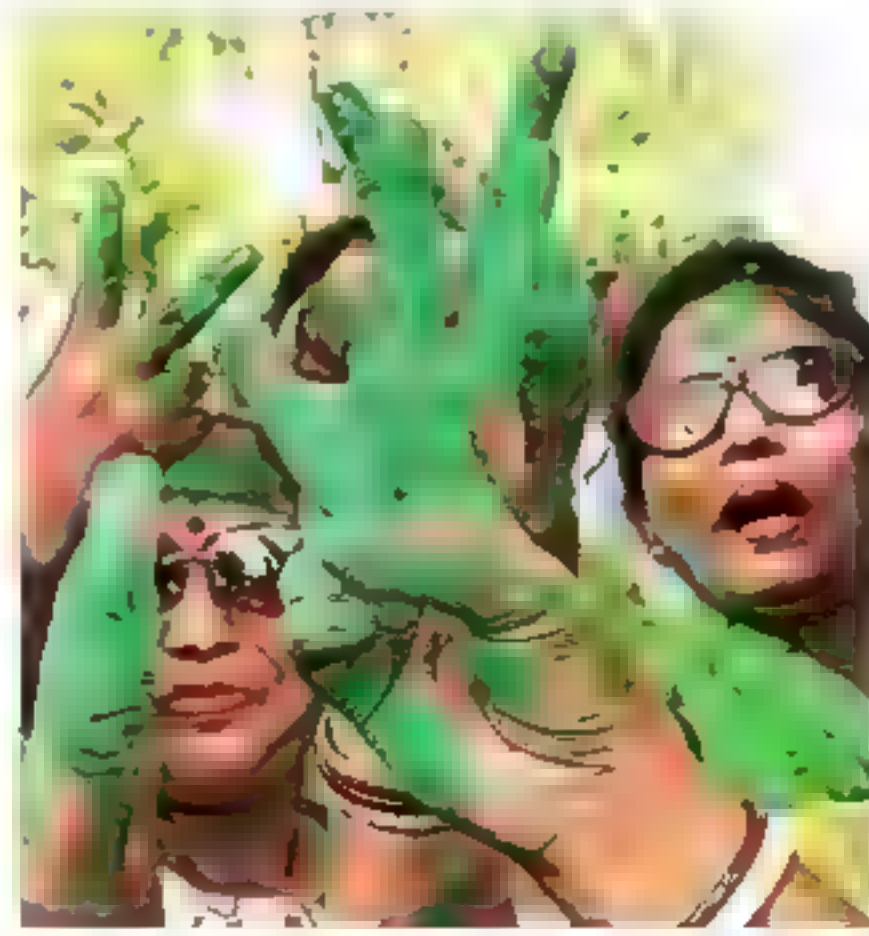
For Modi, the message is that there is only so much sway that a single individual can have in a diverse country, no matter how charismatic he might be and no matter to what extent a narrative is built around him. There is also the question of whether relying on a single vote-catching device creates a sense of sameness due to overexposure. The other significant shift that does not seem to have worked is the move away from a forward looking message and an increasingly angry and negative attack on opposition and minorities.

The problem with silencing other voices is that one effectively removes any chance of getting feedback. Also, the noise generated by a party's support base is so strong and so uniformly aggressive that it compels a reaction. In 2019 this noise could drown out any other competition, this time around things have changed.

For media, there is a salutary lesson to be learned, should it be so inclined. Looking back at exit polls it becomes difficult to believe that all of them suffered from poor methodology and that there was no other agenda involved. The fact that so many people are turning to independent voices

instead of relying on mainstream media should give them cause to reflect.

BJP has to ask itself if its current strategy of seeking to form govt in states by any means necessary has not reached its sell-by date. There

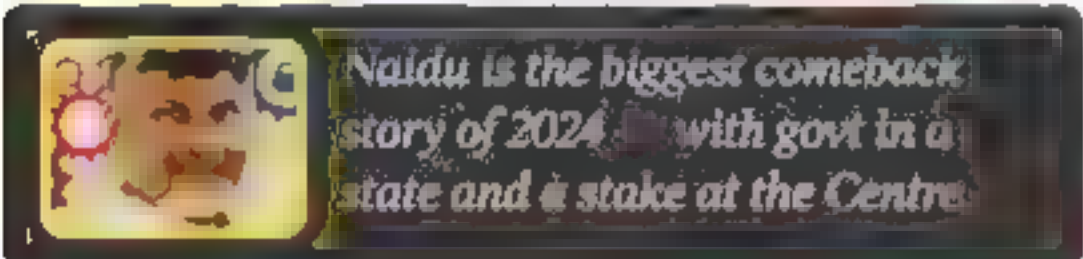


SANTOSH DESAI

NAME OF CONSTITUENCY	MP	Party	Score	Margin
Andhra Pradesh				
Amalapuram	G M Harish (Balayogi)	TDP	M 33	10.54
Anakapalle	C.M.Ramesh	BJP	M 58	497.60
Anantapur	Ambera GL Vaidik	TDP	M 60	4.75
Araku	Gumma Thanuja Rani	YSRCP	F 31	0.24
Bapatla	Krishna Prasad Teneti	TDP	M 64	15.58
Chittoor (SC)	Daggumalla Prasada Rao	TDP	M 62	38.45
Eluru	Putta Mahesh Kumar	TDP	M 36	72.09
Guntur	Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani	TDP	M 48	57.05
Hydrabad	B K Parthasarathi	TDP	M 65	16.90
Kadapa	Y. S. Avinash Reddy	YSRCP	M 39	40.43
Kakinada	Tangella Uday Srinivas	JNP	M 38	31.15
Kurunoolu	Bastipati N Panchalingam	TDP	M 45	9.02
Machilipatnam	Balashowry Vallabhaneni	JNP	M 55	133.72
Nandyal	Dr Byreddy Shaabari	TDP	F 40	14.76
Narsapuram	Bhupathi Raju S Varma	BJP	M 56	7.17
Narsaraopet	Lava Srikrishna Devarayala	TDP	M 41	56.65
Nellore	Prabhakar Vemireddy	TDP	M 68	716.33
Ongole	Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy	TDP	M 70	57.95
Rajahmundry	Daggubati Purandreshwar	BJP	F 67	62.50
Rajampet	P V Midhun Reddy	YSRCP	M 46	146.85
Srikakulam	Kinjara Ram Mohan Naidu	TDP	M 36	23.31
Thirupathi (SC)	Gurumoorthy Maddala	YSRCP	M 38	1.32
Vijayawada	Kesineni Sivanath	TDP	M 55	29.21
Visakhapatnam	Sriharat Mathukumil	TDP	M 35	298.96
Vizianagaram	Appalanadu Kaliseti	TDP	M 50	6.24

Arunachal Pradesh				
Arunachal-East	Tapir Gao	BJP	M 59	15.05
Arunachal-West	Kiren Rijiju	BJP	M 53	4.94

Assam				
Barpeta	Phani Bhutan Choudhury	AGP	M 72	3.28
Darrang Udalguri	Dilip Sarika	BJP	M 50	2.64
Dibrugarh	Rakibul Hussain	Cong	M 59	25.30
Dibrugarh	Sarbananda Sonowal	BJP	M 62	4.76
Diphu	Amarsing Tisso	BJP	M 56	22.79
Guwahati	Bijuli Kalita Medhi	BJP	F 45	1.62
Jorhat	Gaurav Gogoi	Cong	M 41	4.91
Karimganj	Kripanath Mallah	Cong	M 50	1.89
Kaziranga	Kamakhya Prasad Tasa	BJP	M 49	2.00
Kokrajhar	Joyanta Basumatary	JUPPL	M 48	2.29
Lakhimpur	Pradnan Baruah	BJP	M 58	2.42
Nagaon	Pradyut Bordoloi	Cong	M 64	8.39
Silchar	Parimal Suklabaidya	BJP	M 66	1.73
Sonitpur	Ranjit Dutta	BJP	M 67	8.98



Bihar				
Araria	Pradeep Kumar Singh	BJP	M 58	1.61
Arrah	Sudama Prasad	CPI(M)	M 56	0.91
Aurangabad	Abhay Kumar Sinha	RPJ	M 53	10.77
Banka	Giridhari Yadav	JDU	M 63	1.73
Begusarai	Giriraj Singh	BJP	M 71	14.32
Bhagalpur	Ajay Kumar Mandal	JDU	M 46	1.22
Buxar	Sudhakar Singh	RJD	M 52	6.79
Darbhanga	Gopal Jee Thakur	BJP	M 54	3.91
Gaya	Jitan Ram Manjhi	HAMS	M 78	0.30
Gopalganj	Dr. Alok Kumar Suman	JDU	M 62	2.67
Hajipur	Chirag Paswan	LJP(RV)	M 42	2.89
Jahannabad	Surendra Prasad Yadav	RJD	M 65	13.88
Jamui	Arun Bharti	LJP(RV)	M 45	6.49
Jhansi	Rampriti Mandal	JDU	M 68	10.60
Karakat	Raja Ram Singh	CPI(M)	M 66	2.59
Katihar	Taraj Anwar	Cong	M 73	19.61
Khagaria	Rajesh Verma	LJP(RV)	M 31	5.39
Khangana	Mohammad Jawed	Cong	M 60	15.97
Madhepura	Dinesh Chandra Yadav	JDU	M 72	6.73
Madhubani	Ashok Kumar Yadav	BJP	M 54	5.86
Maharajan	Janardan Singh	BJP	M 65	1.75
Munger	Rajiv Ranjan Singh	JDU	M 70	13.78
Muzaffarpur	Raj Bhushan Choudhary	BJP	M 46	16.69
Nawada	Kaushalendra Kumar	JDU	M 65	4.25
Nawada	Vivek Thakur	BJP	M 54	5.06
Paschim Champaran	Dr.Sanjay Jaiswal	BJP	M 58	29.05
Patna	Misha Bharti	RJD	F 47	10.26
Patna Sahib	Ravi Shankar Prasad	BJP	M 69	40.61
Purnia	Rajesh Ranjan	IND	M 56	10.34
Purni Champaran	Radha Mohan Singh	BJP	M 74	4.30
Samasatpur	Shambhu	LJP(RV)	F 25	4.54
Saran	Rajiv Pratap Rudy	BJP	M 62	8.37
Sasaram	Manoj Kumar	Cong	M 40	3.25
Sheehar	Lovely Anand	JDU	F 57	9.46
Sitamarhi	Devesh Chandra Thakur	JDU	M 71	8.85
Siwan	Vijaylakshmi Devi	JDU	F 61	4.41
Supaul	Dileshwar Kamal	JDU	M 78	3.62
Ujjainpur	Nityanand Rai	BJP	M 58	17.95
Vaishali	Veena Devi	LJP(RV)	F 53	46.72
Vaishali	Sunil Kumar	JDU	M 39	12.28

Chhattisgarh				
Bastar	Mahesh Kashyap	BJP	M 48	0.40
Bilaspur	Tohkan Sahu	BJP	M 54	1.32
Durg	Vijay Baghel	BJP	M 64	3.72
Jangir-Champa	Kamlesh Jangde	BJP	F 46	1.55
Kanker	Bhojraj Nag	BJP	M 49	1.24
Korba	Jyotsna Charandas Mahant	Cong	F 70	17.96
Mahesamund	Roop Kamali Choudhary	BJP	F 47	5.39
Raigarh	Rudreshyam Rathia	BJP	M 52	1.07
Rajnagar	Brjmoan Agrawal	BJP	M 64	18.02
Rajnandgaon	Santosh Pandey	BJP	M 56	4.29
Surguja	Chaitamani Maharaj	BJP	M 56	4.13

Goa				
North Goa	Siripad Yesso Naik	BJP	M 71	10.87
South Goa	Captain Viriato Fernandes	Cong	M 54	5.27

Gujarat				
Ahmedabad East	Hasmukhbhai Patel	BJP	M 63	8.65
Ahmedabad West	Dineshbhai Makwana	BJP	M 54	14.18
Amreli	Bharatbhai Sutar	BJP	M 54	0.84
Anand	Mitesh Patel (Bakubhai)	BJP	M 59	11.04
Banaskantha	Gemiben Nagaji Thakor	Cong	F 48	0.85
Bardoli	Parbhubhai Nagarbhai Vasava	BJP	M 54	4.70
Bharuch	Manusukhbhai Vasava	BJP	M 66	2.55
Bhavnagar	Nimuben Bambhaniya	BJP	F 57	2.51
Chhota Odalpur	Jashubhai Bhububhai Rathva	BJP	M 54	1.66
Dahod	Jaswantsinh Bhabher	BJP	M 57	4.84
Gandhinagar	Amir Shah	BJP	M 59	65.67
Jamnagar	Poonamben Hematbhai	BJP	F 49	47.70
Junagadh	Chandrasena Naranbhai	BJP	M 42	3.35
Kachchh	Chavda Vinod Lakhamshi	BJP	M 45	7.10
Kheda	Devesinh Chauhan	BJP	M 59	3.50
Mahesana	Brijmohan Agrawal	BJP	M 62	3.99
Nasir	Chirubhai Patel	BJP	M 69	39.49
Panchmahal	C R Patel	BJP	M 43	2.20
Patan	Rajalsinh Jaday	BJP	M 69	6.84
Porbandar	Debhi Bharatsinhji Shankarji	BJP	M 51	7.95
Rajkot	Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya	BJP	M 69	17.43
Sabarkantha	Shobhambhai Rupala	BJP	F 50	3.18
Surat	Makeshkumar Dalal	BJP	M 62	17.80
Surendranagar	Chandubhai Shihora	BJP	M 61	0.58
Vadodra	Dr. Hemang Joshi	BJP	M 33	1.04
Vadodra	Dhaval Luxmanbhai Patel	BJP	M 37	6.79

Haryana				
Ambar	Vaishu Chaudhry	Cong	M 44	25.95
Bhiwani-Margh	Dharambir Singh	BJP	M 69	11.57
Faridabad	Krishan Pal	BJP	M 67	62.58
Gurgaon	Rao Inderjit Singh	BJP	M 74	121.54
Hisar	Jai Parkash	Cong	M 69	6.81
Karnal	Manohar Lal	BJP	M 70	2.54
Kurukshetra	Naveen Jindal	BJP	M 54	124.14
Rohatki	Deepender Singh Hooda	Cong	M 46	69.26
Sirsa	Selja	Cong	F 61	42.07
Sonapat	Satpal Brahanchari	Cong	M 60	1.61

Himachal Pradesh				
Hamirpur	Anurag Singh Thakur	BJP	M 50	12.27
Kangra	Rajeev	BJP	M 62	5.87
Mandi	Kangna Rana	BJP	F 37	91.66
Shimla	Suresh Kumar Kashyap	BJP	M 53	4.44

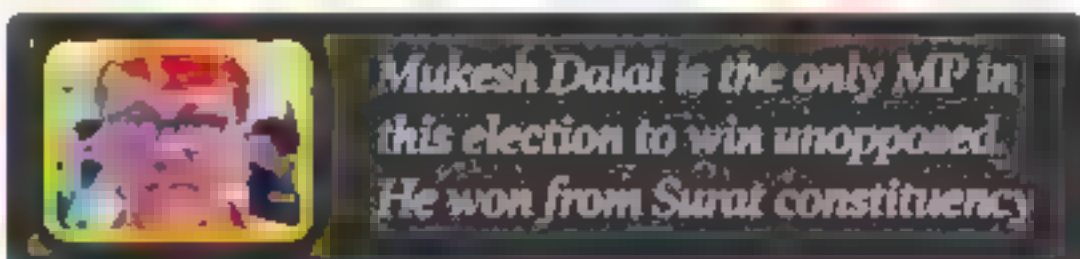
Jharkhand				
Chatra	Kali Charan Singh	BJP	M 62	8.62
Dhanbad	Dule Mahata	BJP	M 49	7.01
Dumka	Nalin Soree	JMM	M 76	3.67
Giridih	Chandra Prakash Choudhary	AJSL	M 55	4.98
Godda	Nishikant Dubey	BJP	M 52	74.70
Hazaribagh	Manish Jaiswal	BJP	M 59	36.30
Jamshedpur	Bidyut Baran Mahato	BJP	M 61	3.83
Khunti	Kali Charan Munda	Cong	M 62	0.54
Kodarna	Ampurna Devi	BJP	F 55	12.83
Lohardaga	Sukhdeo Bhagat	Cong	M 63	0.00
Palamau	Vishnu Dayal Ram	BJP	M 72	0.00
Ranchi	Vijay Kumar Hansdak	JMM	M 41	6.20
Ranchi	Sanjay Seth	BJP	M 65	2.42
Singbhum	Joba Majhi	JMM	F 60	0.00

Know Your MP

Karnataka				
Bangalore	Gaddigoudar Chandagouda	BJP	M 72	7.59
Bangalore Central	P C Mohan	BJP	M 60	81.31
Bangalore North	Shobha Karandlaje	BJP	F 57	13.89
Bangalore Rural	Dr C N Manjunath	BJP	M 67	98.39
Bangalore South	Tejasvi Surya	BJP	M 33	4.10
Belgaum	Jagadeesh Shettar	BJP	M 68	13.38
Bellary	E. Thakuram	Cong	M 57	3.53
Bidari	Sagar Eshwar Khadare	Cong	M 25	13.44
Bijapur	Ramesh Jagajiwagi	BJP	M 71	51.63
Chamarajanagar	Smiti Bose	Cong	M 42	7.85
Chikkaballapur	Dr.K.Sudhakar	BJP	M 50	33.42
Chikkodi	Priyanka Satish Jarkiholi	Cong	F 77	9.12
Chitradurga	Govind Makhappa Karol	BJP	M 73	4.32
Dakshina Kannada	Captain Brijesh Chowda	Cong	M 42	0.71
Davanagere	Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun	BJP	F 48	241.29
Dharwad	Prabhat Joshi	BJP	M 61	21.10
Gulbarga	Radhakrishna	Cong	M 63	53.39
Hassan	Shreyas M. Patel	BJP	M 32	42.67
Haveri	Basavaraj Bommal	BJP	M 64	53.95
Kolar	M. Mahesh Babu	JDS	M 49	23.66
Koppal	V. Rajeshwar B Hirral	Cong	M 44	29.04
Mandya	H.D. Kumaraswamy	JDS	M 65	0.00
Mysore	Yaduveer Wadiyar	BJP	M 32	9.47
Rachur	G. Kumar Naik	Cong	M 60	33.41
Shimoga	S.Y.Raghavendra	BJP	M 50	73.71
Tumkur	V. Somanna	BJP	M 72	60.78
Udupi	Kola Srinivas Poojary	BJP	M 64	7.95
Uttara Kannada	Hegde Vishveshwar	BJP	M 63	16.74

Kerala				
Airappuzha	K. C Venugopal	Cong	M 61	3.63
Alathur	K.Radhakrishnan	CPM	M 60	0.40
Attingal	Advocate Adoor Prakash	Cong	M 68	0.00
Chalakkudy	Benzy Behanan	Cong	M 71	3.50
Ernakulam	Ethi Eden	Cong	M 40	3.38
Idukki	Adv. Dean Kuriaose	Cong	M 42	2.08
Kannur	K. Sudhakaran	Cong	M 75	6.30
Kasaragod	Rajmohan Unnikrishnan	Cong	M 70	3.24
Kollam	N K Premachandran	RSP	M 63	4.92
Kottayam	Adv K Francis George	KEC	M 68	9.51
Kozhikode	M. K. Raghavan	Cong	M 71	2.49
Malappuram	E.T. Mohammed Basheer	IUM	M 77	2.03
Mangalagiri	Kodikkunni Suresh	Cong	M 60	1.51
Palakkad	V K Sreekandan	Cong	M 54	1.24
Pathanamthitta	Ano Antony	Cong	M 67	1.25
Ponnani	Abdussamad Samadani	IUM	M 65	2.20
Trivandrum	Shashi Tharoor	Cong	M 68	56.07
Thiruvananthapuram	Suresh Gopi	BJP	M 65	18.58
Thiruvananthapuram	Shail Parambil	Cong	M 41	0.99
Wayanad	Rahul Gandhi	Cong	M 53	20.40

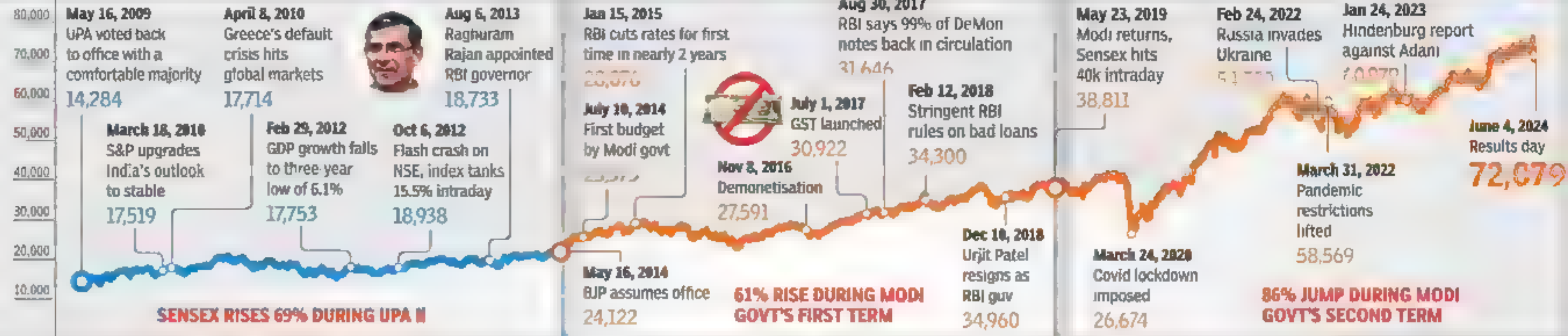
Madhya Pradesh				
Balaghat	Bharti Pardihi	BJP	F 56	5.90
Betul	Durgadas (D. D.) Ukey	BJP	M 60	1.85
Bhind	Sandhya Ray	BJP	F 50	9.68
Bhopal	Alok Sharma	BJP	M 56	8.86
Chhindwara	Bunty Vivek Sahu	BJP	M 45	36.77
Damoh	Rajesh Singh Lodhi	BJP	M 40	1.64
Dewas	Mahendra Singh Solanki	BJP	M 40	0.38
Dhar	Sankar Thakur	BJP	F 45	5.31
Guna	Jyoti Pradip M. Scindia	BJP	M 53	42.75
Gwalior	Bharat Singh Kushwah	BJP	M 53	2.88
Hoshangabad	Bharat Singh Choudhary	BJP	M 48	0.93
Indore	Shankar Lalwani	BJP	M 62	1.95
Jabalpur	Achint Debey	BJP	M 54	35.19
Khajuraho	Vishnu Datt Sharma	BJP	M 54	4.93
Khandwa	Ganeshwar Patel	BJP	M 55	7.22
Kharagone	Chandra Singh Patel	BJP	M 49	9.98
Mandla	Pappu Singh Kalaste	BJP	M 64	5.35
Mandsour	Sudheer Gupta	BJP	M 64	19.29
Morena	Shivmangal Singh Tomar	BJP	M 63	6.55
Raigarh	Rodman Nagar	BJP	M 63	6.55
Ratlam	Anita Nagarsingh Choudhary	BJP	F 39	5.25
Rewa	Janardan Mishra	BJP	M 67	5.09
Sagar	Dr. Lata Wankhede	BJP	F 54	17.35
Satna	Ganesh Singh	BJP	M 61	9.47
Shahdol	Smt. Himadri Singh	BJP	F 37	5.02
Sidhi	Dr. Rajesh Mishra	BJP	M 66	14.40
Tikamgarh	Dr. Vinod Kumar	BJP	M 70	2.88
Ujjain	Anil Priyanka	BJP	M 52	8.82
Vidisha	Shivraj Singh Chouhan	BJP	M 65	8.99



Maharashtra				
Ahmednagar	Nitesh Dnyandev Lanke	NCP(SP)	M 44	0.46
Akola	Anup Sanjay Dhotre	BJP	M 39	10.93
Amravati	Balwant B Wankhade	Cong	M 56	1.74
Aurangabad	Bhurnare S Asaram	SS	M 62	10.31
Baramati	Sajay Sale	NCP(SP)	F 54	166.52
Beed	Begur Manohar Sonawane	NCP(SP)	M 53	28.93
Bhandara-Gondiya	Prashant Yashwantrao Padole	Cong	M 45	14.47
Bhivandri	Suresh Gopinath Mhatre	NCP(SP)	M 53	107.55
Budhgha	Jadhav Prataprao Gampatrao	SS	M 63	16.43
Chandrapur	Dhanorkar Prabhakar Suresh	Cong	F 38	80.37
Dhule	Bachchan Shobha Dinesh	Cong	F 65	30.50
Dindori	Bhaskar Marbholkar Bhagare	NCP(SP)	M 53	1.75
Dr. Kisan Namdeo	Dr. Kisan Namdeo	Cong	M 55	5.95</

More Wealth For More Indians

Sensex is up more than 5 times since mid-2009 and 3 times since May 2014, indicating that stock markets have created large and sustained wealth in the past decade-and-a-half. Average gains were highest in the last five years, and middle-class participation in the market also increased the most since 2019



Money Managers See Policy Continuity With Economic Reforms, Capex & Infra Spending Despite NDA's Narrow Victory

Shock Exchange: Bulls Have Bears To Cross On D-St

Inflated stock valuations get reality check

Adani mcap dives ₹3.6L cr a day after hitting 16-mth high

TEAM TOI

Mumbai: Indian fund managers want the current pace of economic reforms and pro-industry policies to continue under the incoming govt.

Most believe that even though the BJP-led alliance now has a depleted mandate, it would continue the works and projects launched under the outgoing govt. This is despite the nervousness that gripped investors after the Lok Sabha poll results came out on Tuesday.

Money managers also believe that the poll mandate that is being perceived as disappointing for the ruling alliance but a great morale booster for the opposition could rein in the raging bull market in India and make valuations more rational. "The election result is likely to lead to a more balanced market. Risk-reward in large-caps and underperforming sectors like banking and consumer appear more favourable," Rahul Singh, CIO (equities) at Tata MF, said. "There is likely to be greater scrutiny and valuation discipline in the performing sectors like capital goods, power, defence and manufacturing."

Market Mood Swings Overnight

June 3	June 4
After Exit Polls	After Results
SBI	-14
L&T	-13
Tata Steel	-9
Reliance	-8
HDFC Bank	-6

...What Should Investors Do

- > Avoid taking impulsive decisions amid elevated volatility in the market
- > There's a high chance govt policies will continue and the market will stabilise
- > Don't deviate or alter your investment plan if you have one that's goal-based
- > Review your portfolio and rebalance only if the situation demands it

forms that had been initiated under the (outgoing) BJP-led govt," said Vinit Sambre, head (equities), DSP Mutual Fund. "This has triggered a correction in the markets as investors reassess the outlook under the new political landscape. We would like to believe that the development agenda that spurred the performance of equity is likely to persist irrespective of the party in power."

Fund managers believe that capital expenditure, both by govt and the private sector, are integral to the growth of the economy. Moreover, private capex—that has been lagging for the last few years—should start and either supplement or complement the capex by govt.

"We would like to see the incoming govt continue to create a favourable environment for four growth factors: increased foreign direct investments into the country, private capex, continuation of govt capex and better infrastructure, both social and physical," said Anand Shah, CIO for PMS & AIF Investments, ICICI Prudential AMC.

Fund managers believe that with India in a sweet spot in terms of macroeconomic fundamentals, any improvement at the global level—like improving macro fundamentals for the Chinese economy and rate cuts in the US—could act as tailwinds for the domestic economy. The Budget for FY25 would be one of the deciding factors for the economy and the markets. "Any moderation in the capital spending outlook (in the Budget) in favour of consumption support can further drive sectoral preferences going forward," Singh of Tata MF said.

TEAM TOI

Mumbai: Investors in Adani Group companies were left poorer by Rs 3.6 lakh crore on Tuesday as stock prices of all 11 companies crashed on the back of a depleted mandate for the BJP-led NDA coalition. Opposition parties have alleged that Adani Group has benefited the most since PM Modi assumed office in May 2014. Investors believe that a weaker mandate for NDA may lead to the group losing an edge. At the same time, the group would be under stricter scrutiny of a stronger opposition. These factors weighed on Adani Group stocks in Tuesday's crashing market, dealers said.

During the day, as stock prices of Adani Group companies crashed, the group's combined market capitalisation fell from Rs 19.4 lakh crore on Monday to Rs 15.8 lakh crore, BSE data showed. Group flagship Adani Enterprises led the slump. As

Adani Ports Leads Rout, Crashes 21%

June 3	% change	June 4
Adani Ports	10.2	-21.3
Adani Energy	8.0	-20
Adani Ent	6.9	-19.4
Adani Green	6.4	-19.2
Adani Total Gas	7.0	-18.9
NDTV	6.1	-18.5
Adani Power	15.6	-17.3
Ambuja	5.7	-16.9
ACC	5.7	-14.7
Adani Wilmar	3.5	-10
Sanghi	3.1	-8.6

the stock crashed 19%, its market cap eroded by Rs 80,416 crore. Adani Ports—the group company that will soon be a part of the sensex—lost a fifth of its market value or nearly Rs 22,800 crore to its current level of Rs 2.7 lakh crore. Among other group companies, Adani Green Energy lost nearly Rs 62,000 crore worth of market value

while Adani Power lost about Rs 58,300 crore.

It was on Monday, boosted by strong exit poll projections for the BJP-led govt, that the group's market cap had breached its pre-Hindenburg report level to hit a 16-month high. Investors are now nervous about the prospects of the group's companies, dealers said.

How New Govt Will Face Key Policy Issues

Geopolitical uncertainties and the global economic situation may require acceleration of reforms. But with a coalition govt at the Centre, it may not be easy as some issues, such as privatisation and a relook at GST, need consensus. TOI lists top areas of focus:

GST REVAMP: Five-slab GST rate structure may not be reviewed immediately as it may require merging the 12% and 18% slabs, necessitating an increase in levies on goods and services that move into the higher bracket. That's an issue on which political consensus may not be easy.

PUBLIC FINANCES: Privatisation is likely to be put on a backburner for some time. While RBI's mega dividend of Rs 2.1L cr and robust GST revenues will keep Centre's finances in good shape, the Centre may have to go slow on cleaning up the subsidy regime further, although greater use of technology to plug leakages is something that won't change.

INVESTMENT PUSH: After hitting a high of \$85 billion in 2021-22, the annual inflow of foreign direct investments has fallen for two consecutive years, touching \$71 billion in 2023-24. Govt is expected to make the investment regime more attractive in several sectors, including electric vehicles and artificial intelligence.

FOOD PRICES: Although overall inflation has moderated (see chart below), food prices remain both volatile and high. Govt may take steps to weatherproof prices and shield it from climate-induced shocks such as heatwaves and floods.

AGRICULTURE: The latest GDP data indicates a relative stagnation in the farm sector. Reforms focusing on irrigation and use of AI to raise productivity are expected. Election results point to the challenging but imminent need to raise farmers' income.

EXPORTS & PLI: The production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme has helped push exports of smartphones and other products but there have been demands to extend it to more sectors, such as toys and footwear. Expect fine-tuning of PLI to focus more sharply on companies and sectors willing to shift out of China for export production.

REGULATORY CLARITY: Before the poll dates were announced, several new economic legislations were in the works. A better regulation of cryptocurrencies, AI, data protection is under consideration.

MAINTAINING GROWTH: Most economists do not expect 2024-25 GDP growth to be a repeat of 8.2% growth in 2023-24. But ensuring a growth rate of even 7% in the current global economic environment won't be easy. Among the steps expected are a road map for energy transition and a push for infra investments. Economic ministries have made action plans with specific targets for 2030 and 2047. A ministry-wise action plan could be unveiled, if there is a consensus in the new govt.

Fear factor: India VIX jumps 50% to 2-year high

From P 1

After some late buying, the index closed at 72,079 points, still down 4,390 points or 5.7%—the biggest single-session loss in its history (in points). Nifty lost 1,379 points or 5.9% to close at 21,884 points. At one point during the day's session, Nifty was just about 150 points off hitting the 10% lower circuit level, which would

PSUs Lose Most

Top Sensex Losers On Tuesday (%)	
16	NTPC
14	SBI
12	Power Grid

PSU Banks Worst-Hit Sector
(% change in Nifty indices)

have stopped trading across all bourses for at least an hour. The day's market crash left investors poorer by Rs 31 lakh crore, with BSE's market capitalisation now at Rs 401.2 lakh crore, translating to \$4.8 trillion.

Among the sensex stocks, only three—HUL, Nestle and TCS—closed higher while the other 27 constituents closed in the red. PSU stocks, which have seen a stellar run during the last two years mainly on the back of pro-sector policies of govt, crashed. Among the maharatna companies, NTPC crashed 15.5% and Powergrid Corp lost 12.4%, while SBI fell 14.4% down. As a result, BSE's PSU index closed 15.7% down, BSE data showed.

During Tuesday's session, India VIX, the measure of volatility, spiked nearly 50%, touching an over two-year high at 31.7 points and finally settling at 26.75, NSE data showed.

Rupee plunges by 42 paise, most in a year, to 83.53 vs \$

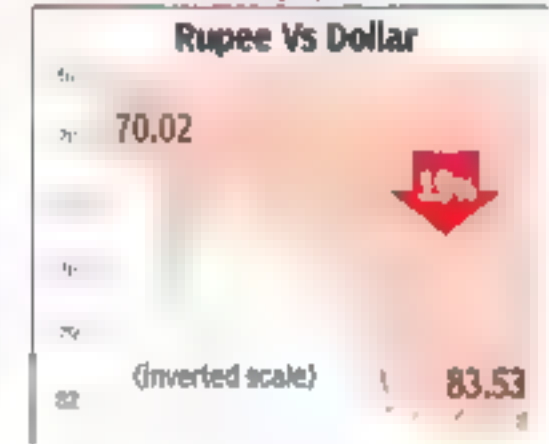
TEAM TOI

Mumbai: The rupee fell the most in over a year to close at 83.53 against the dollar down 42 paise over Monday's close. Prices of govt bonds also fell sharply, with the yields on the benchmark 10-year bond rising by over 5 basis points (100bps = 1 percentage point) to cross 7%.

The rupee came under pressure following a nearly 6% drop in equity indices, where foreign investors are believed to have sold their stakes.

"While equity markets had

70 To 83.5/\$ In 5 Yrs

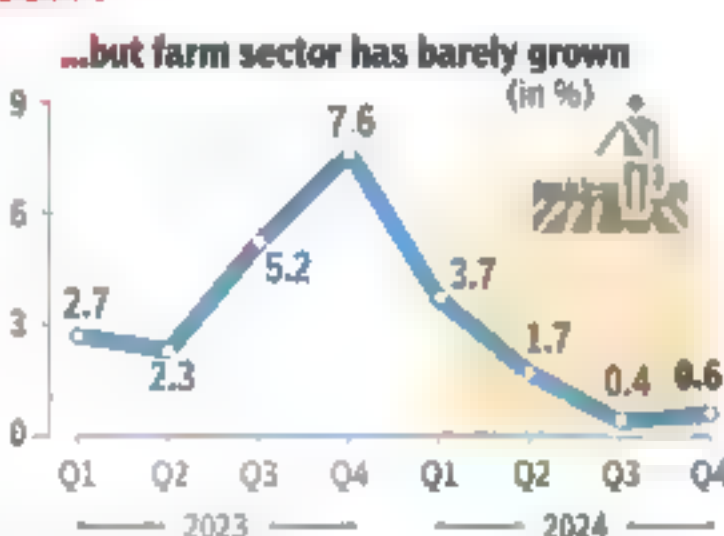


seen a huge run-up amid recent volatility, volatility in the forex market has been extremely low... it may rise in the

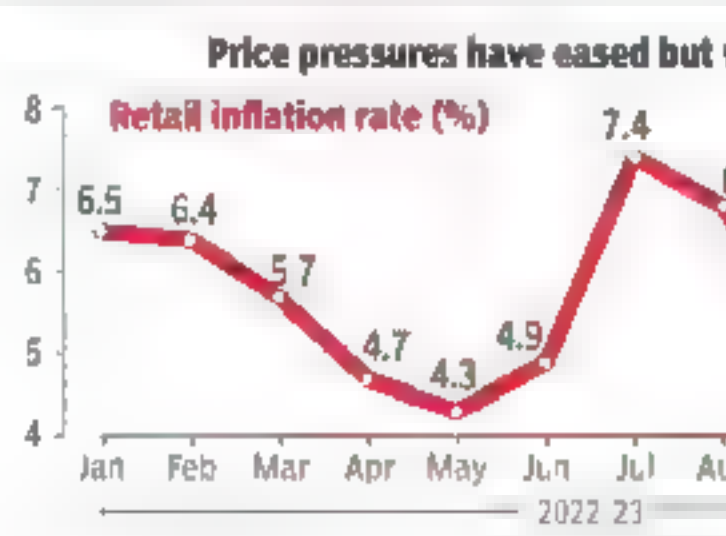
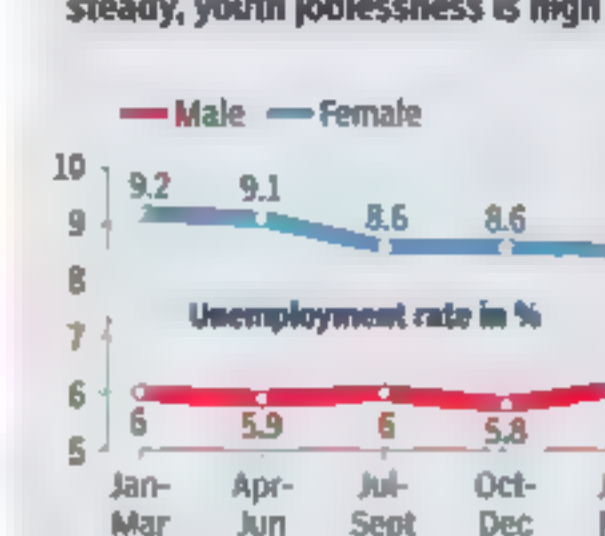
short term as political clarity emerges. Going forward, it is back to global cues for the forex market... the rupee should trade within a range of 83 to 84 against the dollar," said Ashish Vaidya, head of treasury, DBS Bank. "The India story is still intact. It is not getting derailed and hence, the rupee should remain well-managed and within a range," he added.

Dealers said that the rupee hit an intra-day low of 83.65, but dollar sales by public sector banks—ostensibly at the behest of RBI—led to a marginal recovery in the exchange rate.

Where We Stand Now...



While urban unemployment rate is steady, youth joblessness is high



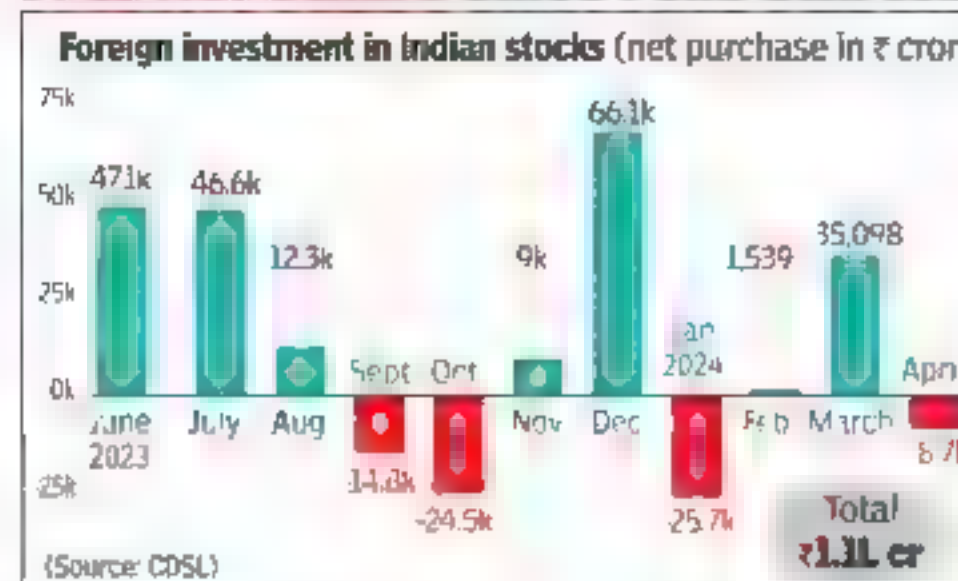
Foreign funds to sit on fence for now

TEAM TOI

Mumbai: Foreign fund managers, who have been cautious on Indian stocks since the Lok Sabha polls started in April, are expected to maintain the status quo. Neither go on investing with fresh zeal nor take money out in droves. Foreign portfolio investors feel that the lower-than-expected Lok Sabha seats for the BJP could limit their decision-making bandwidth in the coming days.

Since April this year, FPIs have been net sellers of stocks in India and have net taken out nearly Rs 37,700 crore, including Tuesday's net selling figure of Rs 12,456 crore, data from the BSE and CDSL showed. Any major change in investment patterns of foreign

FPIs Net Sellers Since Polls Started



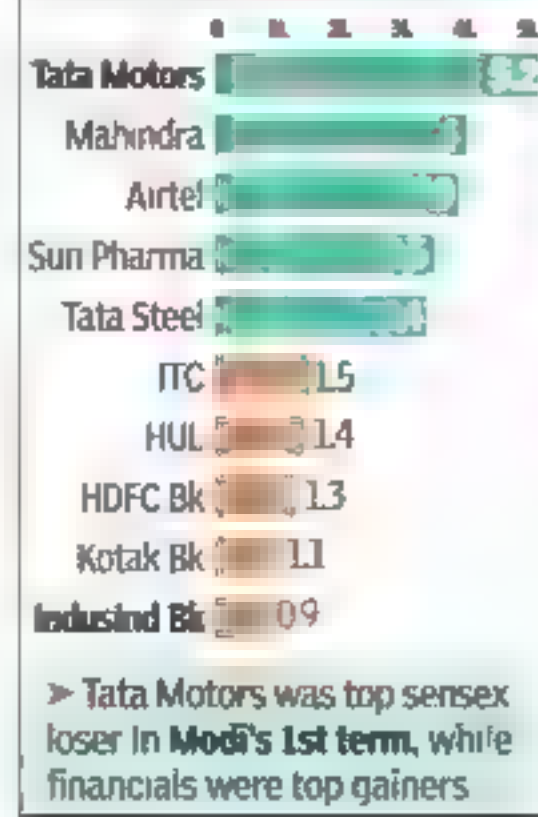
funds in India could have a strong impact on the stock market, dealers said. "After a weak political outcome, we believe investors will focus on govt formation and the choice of prime ministerial candidate considering the BJP does not have a simple

majority of its own," a report by foreign broking major UBS said. The other focus areas would be "policy choices to support growth vis-a-vis ensuring macro stability, and the reform narrative."

UBS analysts said they would watch out for upcoming union budget announcements, implementation of labour laws and the next set of reforms in land and capital.

In Modi's 2nd Term, TaMo Was Best Bet, IndusInd Worst

₹1 lakh invested in sensex stocks on May 23, 2019, when Modi was re-elected as PM, would today have been worth...



IPO wave in India has no reason to stop, say analysts

TEAM TOI

Mumbai: India, which has emerged as the second-largest IPO market on the world league table, has raised \$4 billion so far this year. With NDA returning to form the next govt, hopes of policy continuity should extend the IPO boom throughout the rest of 2024.

The \$4 billion raised by India is about 45% less than what it collected in all of 2023. LSEG data shows, but outperforms China (\$3 billion) and Saudi Arabia (\$2.1 billion). The number is also higher than the combined amount raised in Turkey, Hong Kong and South Korea. The US is the largest IPO mar-

Ahead Of China...



ket, having raised \$14 billion so far in 2024, according to LSEG. From number 11 in 2019, India secured the third place globally in terms of IPO proceeds after the US and China in 2023. India has hosted 113 IPOs between Jan this year and

now. "Amidst general elections, the primary market remained vibrant with the solid response to certain IPOs like Awfis Space Solutions. Confidence can be gauged by these offerings that have been launched amidst elections... Looking ahead, the market is set to witness a flurry of IPOs, from new-age business as well as from conventional business segments," said Mahavir Lunawat, MD at investment bank Pantomath Capital Advisors. Several companies such as Hyundai Motor India, Tata Capital, Ola Electric Mobility, and Swiggy, and NSDL are looking at launching their IPOs.

RACE TO LOK SABHA

Pass Or Fail?

SULTANPUR, UP

Maneka Gandhi

BJP

LOST TO

Rambhual Nishad

SP

BY 43,174 VOTES

NAGINA, UP

Chandrashekhar Azad

BAZAR SAMAJ PARTY

WON AGAINST

Om Kumar

BJP

BY 1,51,473 VOTES

PURI, ODISHA

Sambit Patra

BJP

WON AGAINST

Arup Mohan Pattnaik

BJD

BY 1,04,709 VOTES

TAMLUK, WB

Abhijit Gangopadhyay

BJP

WON AGAINST

Debangshu Bhattacharya

TMC

BY 77,733 VOTES

KOTA, RAJASTHAN

Om Birla

BJP

WON AGAINST

Prahlad Gunjal

Cong

BY 41,974 VOTES

BARAMATI, MH

Supriya Sule

NCP (SP)

WON AGAINST

Sunetra Ajitdada Pawar

NCP

BY 1,58,333 VOTES

HASSAN, KARNATAKA

Prajwal Revanna

JD(S)

LOST TO

Shreyas M Patel

Cong

BY 42,649 VOTES

Modi margin dips from 4.8L to 1.5L, vote share from 63.6% to 54.2%

Closest Fight Since 2014 Win Despite 70K Rise In Total Votes Polled

Rajeev Dikshit
@timesgroup.com

Varanasi Prime Minister Narendra Modi won Varanasi Lok Sabha seat by defeating INDIA bloc candidate and Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Rai, but his 1.5-lakh vote victory margin on Tuesday marked the closest contest the prime minister has faced since his victory in 2014, and a steep fall from 2019 when he had won by 4.8 lakh votes.

Rai, jubilant even in defeat, claimed he had scored a "moral victory". As the sole challenger, he had not only stopped Modi from making a new victory margin record but also set one himself losing to Modi with the smallest margin.

It is not just Modi's margin that has fallen. He got about 62,000 fewer votes this time (61 lakh compared to 6.8 lakh in 2019) despite the total votes in the constituency rising by about 70,000 (from 10.6 lakh to 11.3 lakh). His vote share dropped from



Modi bagged 6,12,970 votes to defeat Rai, who secured 4,60,457. In 2014, Modi's victory margin was 3.7 lakh

63.6% to 54.2%.

Modi bagged 6,12,970 votes to defeat Rai, who secured 4,60,457. In 2014, Modi's victory margin was 3.7 lakh. Earlier in the day, TV news flashes had created a flutter when they showed Rai leading by 8,000 votes after the first three rounds of counting.

Rai's parliamentary constituency poll management team convener, Surendra Narain Singh Audhe, said, "In 2014, anti-BJP votes were divided among four contenders, while it was divided be-

tween two contestants in 2019. Moreover, this time, an entire chunk of non-BJP votes went to the INDIA bloc candidate. This was the reason for the reduced victory margin."

But why did Modi's vote count fall despite the total number of votes polled on June 1 being greater than in 2019? BJP Kashi region unit president Dilip Singh Patel said, "We are scheduling an organisation meeting in which all reasons for the 2024 LS poll performance in Varanasi seat will be reviewed."

Rai was happy. "The people of Varanasi showered their blessings on me to show the mirror to those who in their arrogance of power raised slogans of notching up 10 lakh votes and had engaged money power and their best force in Kashi to achieve the target of winning the election with the biggest margin. INDIA bloc unitedly shattered this dream," said Rai, who had finished third in 2014 and 2019.

Early results during counting of votes at Pahadiya Mandi shocked BJP as in the initial three rounds Rai was leading. But once Modi took the lead, he maintained it till the last round. However, the lead increased slowly, unlike the galloping seen in 2014 and 2019 when Modi was in the lead right from the first round.

At Gulab Bagh, where victory celebrations took place late evening, it was evident that the jubilation lacked the vigour of the past two elections.

INDIA bloc wins 12 of 17 UP seats with higher women turnout



FAIR POLLS

Lucknow INDIA bloc won 12 of the 17 UP seats — a strike rate of 70% — where women voter turnout was more than men in absolute numbers, reports Arvind Chauhan

Congress's Rahul Gandhi and Kishori Lal Sharma won with more than 3.9 lakh and 1.6 lakh votes in Rae Bareilly and Amethi, where 5,23,822 and 4,92,861 women voted, respectively. The other 10 seats were won by SP in Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Ambedkar Nagar, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Azamgarh, Jaunpur, Salempur, Lalganj and Machhlishahr.

The remaining five seats where more women voted than men were Domariyaganj, Bangaon, Maharajganj, Kushinagar and Deoria. BJP was winning or leading in them

It's not the 1st time exit polls have gone awry. Here's why it happens

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi. Psephologist Pra deep Gupta wept on live television on Tuesday. The reputed pollster was way off target in his prediction of Lok Sabha 2024 election results. Axis India Today had given 361-401 seats to NDA.

He wasn't the only one psephologist who got the outcome wrong. Today's Chanakya News24, ETG Times Now Marize Republic Bharat, ABP Cyber all were spectacularly inaccurate. And many were left wondering what could have led to the mismatch between exit polls and actual results.

D Shyam Babu of Centre for Policy Research says that when you have electoral waves, such as the anti-incumbency wave in 2014, prediction gets closer to reality. "Exit polls don't deliver when the contest is close and we need them as in this election," he says.

It is not the first time that exit polls proved to be erroneous. In 2004, exit polls had predicted a majority for the incumbent NDA gov led by PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. But the coalition ended up getting fewer seats than Congress-led UPA. Such surveys also went haywire in several assembly polls in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and other states.

Shyam Babu speculates that it could be that many who voted for non-BJP parties might have misreported their choice. "This could be partly due to apprehension or a factor of groupthink, not backing an obvious and ascendant BJP might appear



PLANNED DEMOCRACY

silly or bigoted," he says.

Rahul Verma of CPR offered a state-wise break-up of the exit polls. "Kerala, TN, Gujarat, MP, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Jharkhand on expected lines. Karnataka, Bihar, Odisha, AP, Telangana, Delhi in the direction pollsters predicted. UP, Maharashtra, West Bengal three largest states with 160 seats — horribly wrong," he posted on X.

Social scientist Badri Narayan agrees the exit polls were bang on in several states but also woefully inaccurate in three big states. He attributed this to a possibly flawed methodology. "It seems the pollsters listened to the visible public and did not speak to the quiet voter," he said. In exit polls, voters are asked about their political choice after they have cast their ballot.

Sociologist Dipankar Gupta

says that there is no way an enumerator can tick boxes which capture gestures, rolling eyes, shrug and glances. "He or she is biased in favour of perceptions fed by media, which leads this person to consider ambiguous responses as one in line with pre-existing biases. The enumerator is nearly always from a different social and social background," he says.

"Also, in an environment which is hierarchical and lacks trust there is a tendency to conceal one's honest opinion, especially if the respondent perceives that his or her view is out of the ordinary and what is generally acceptable at this point of time," he says.

Political scientist Balveer Arora says the exit polls displayed a herd mentality. "None of them wanted to risk underplaying BJP. They lost credibility in the process," he says.

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
JHARKHAND BHAWAN, GOVT. OF JHARKHAND
NEW DELHI-110057

NOTICE FOR CANCELLATION OF NIT 321526 DATED 06.03.2024 AND INVITATION OF FRESH TENDERS HOUSEKEEPING & CATERING SERVICES IN JHARKHAND BHAWAN, NEW DELHI

The tender invited through PR 321526 dated 06.03.2024, is hereby cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances and fresh tenders are invited for the same.

Sealed tenders are invited from reputed parties having relevant experience for "Round the clock Housekeeping, Cleaning, Catering and maintenance of Reception Desk, General Pest Control & Rodent Control at Jharkhand Bhawan," guesthouse at Kusumpur Pahari, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi-110057 from the date of agreement for a period of 2 years. The Jharkhand Bhawan includes 20 standard rooms, 2 Executive suites, 2 VIP suites and office of the Resident Commissioner, Jharkhand Bhawan.

Prescribed tender forms along with NIT, terms and conditions, scope of work, qualification criterion etc can be obtained from the office of the Secretary, Department of Cabinet Secretariat and Vigilance (Co-ordination), Govt. of Jharkhand, Project Building, Jharkhand Sachivalaya, Ranchi, or from the office of the Resident Commissioner, Jharkhand Bhawan, Kusumpur Pahari, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi from 10.06.2024 onwards, working days during office hours.

Cost of the form is Rs. 1000/- and to be paid in cash. MSMEs are exempted from payment of Tender document fee and EMD as per Government policy.

Filled up tender form, along with bank draft of Rs. 50,000/- drawn in favour of Chief Administrative Officer, Jharkhand Bhawan, Govt. of Jharkhand towards refundable Earnest Money should be submitted in two separate sealed covers each containing technical bid and financial bid respectively in the office of Chief Administrative Officer, Jharkhand Bhawan, Kusumpur Pahari, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi-110057 (Tel. No. 26739000) latest by 5 PM on 25.06.2024. Tender is not transferable.

Each page of the tender form should be signed by the bidder. The technical bids shall be opened at 11 A.M. on 26.06.2024, at Jharkhand Bhawan, New Delhi in presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives with Valid ID Card and authorization letter. Due to unforeseen circumstances if the tender is not opened on the stipulated date, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time i.e., 11 A.M. The financial bids will be opened after evaluation of technical bids by the tender committee.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
JHARKHAND BHAWAN,
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PR 325279 Cabinet(24-25) D

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RACE TO LOK SABHA Pass Or Fail? Asaduddin Owaisi AIMIM WON AGAINST Madhavi Kompella BJP BY 3,38,087 VOTES	Dimpe Yadav SP WON AGAINST Jayveer Singh BJP BY 2,21,639 VOTES	Digvijaya Singh CONG LOST TO Rodmal Nagar BJP BY 1,46,089 VOTES	K Annamalai BJP LOST TO Ganapathy Rajkumar P DMK BY 1,18,068 VOTES	Mahua Moitra TMC WON AGAINST Amrita Roy BJP BY 56,705 VOTES	O Panneerselvam INDEPENDENT LOST TO Navaskani K IUMML BY 1,66,782 VOTES	Shashi Tharoor CONG WON AGAINST Rajeev Chandrasekhar BJP BY 16,077 VOTES

Shinde's man prevails in Sena vs Sena cliffhanger by meagre 48 votes

Micha Pinto & Sumitra Deb Roy | TNN

Mumbai: The Mumbai Northwest constituency was expected to be an intense Sena vs Sena battle—and counting day exceeded expectations.

In a nail-biting finish, Ravindra Waikar of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena narrowly defeated Shiv Sena (Uddhav Thackeray) Amol Kirtikar by just 48 votes, the lowest margin in the state. Incidentally, the constituency also had the highest number of NOTAs in the city, which has six Lok Sabha seats.

Uddhav Thackeray said his party will challenge the result. UBT's Kirtikar had been leading the EVM count till his lead shrank to one vote. When the postal ballots were added, the lead swung in his rival Waikar's favour

valid postal votes. But officials deemed that these votes stood as invalid.

Kirtikar received a total of 4,52,596 votes, while Waikar received 4,52,644 votes. The atmosphere outside Nescoshifted when Sena UBT supporters, who had brought their dhol tasha and colours, learned about his narrow loss. They began to shout slogans of "cheater" even as Waikar's supporters celebrated. Police presence was strengthened but there was no violence, officials said.

Waikar said, "I am glad to have got an opportunity to serve the nation through this seat. I also feel bad about Amol's loss and apologize to him". Waikar thanked Eknath Shinde, Devendra Fadnis and Raj Thackeray before leaving the counting venue. Amol Kirtikar didn't comment on the final results.



Uddhav Thackeray said his party will challenge the result. UBT's Kirtikar had been leading the EVM count till his lead shrank to one vote. When the postal ballots were added, the lead swung in his rival Waikar's favour

Congress wrests both Manipur seats, JNU prof among winners

TEAM TOI

Guwahati: Congress wrested Manipur from BJP and its ally NPF, with both Meitei-dominated valley and tribal-majority hills voting in grand old party after a year of ethnic strife that has cost over 200 lives.

While JNU professor Angomcha Bimol Akoljam defeated state minister and BJP candidate Thounaojam Basanta Kumar in Inner Manipur, in the hills Alfred Kannam S Arthur beat NPF's Kachul Timothy Zimik in Outer Manipur seat.

For voters across the valley and the hills, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's visit to the state during the height of the ethnic clashes provided them the attention they had sought from New Delhi. This was something that PM Narendra Modi failed to deliver, and the people reciprocated accordingly.

Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee president Keisham Meghachandra Singh, expressed gratitude to the state's people for electing Congress candidates in both seats and dedicated the electoral success to people who have suffered in the strife and those driven from their homes by violence to relief camps.

AICC member and senior spokesperson for Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee Ningombam Bupenda Meitei wrote on 'X': "Leave 400, the people of Manipur have rejected the outgoing PM Modi by giving a margin of 1.5 lakh votes for INC candidate, Dr. @Bimol_Akoljam and a margin of more than 0.7 lakh votes for another Congress candidate, Alfred Arthur, in 2 seats from Manipur (sic)."

SP scores in all regions, takes pole position

From 5 Seats In '19, Tally Swells To 35 & 2 Leads

Arvind Chauhan
@timesgroup.com

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party's jump from five Lok Sabha seats in 2019 to pole position five years later marks a stunning comeback against all expectations

SP's ally Congress won five seats in the central region: Rae Bareilly, Amethi, Allahabad, Sitapur and Barabanki

ing comeback against all expectations, with the bonus of an all-round performance spanning all four regions of this vast and diverse state. Late Tuesday, Akhilesh Yadav's party was sitting pretty



SP supporters celebrate in Lucknow on Tuesday. The party's stellar show marks a stunning comeback against all expectations

with 37 seats.

In Rohilkhand, SP and its ally Congress won five seats each, including Kaifia, with a margin of 69,116 votes, Muzaffarnagar by 24,672 votes and Firozabad by 89,312

votes. The rural seat of Mainpuri also went SP's way. At last count, Etah was almost in the kitty.

In Moradabad, SP's margin of victory was 1.05 lakh votes, while Muslim-dom-

inant Rampur gave the party a winning margin of 87,434 votes. In Sambhal, SP was victorious by 1.3 lakh votes.

Its INDIA bloc partner Congress won the Saharanpur seat by 64,542 votes.

In the central region, SP won 11 seats — Fatehpur, Kaushambi, Faizabad, Amedkar Nagar, Kheri, Dhaurahra, Mohanlalgarh, Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Etawah and Kannauj.

In Kheri, SP's Utkarsh Verma Madhur defeated Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra Toni by 34,329 votes.

Sultanpur saw Rambhul Nishad trounce BJP's Mane-ka Gandhi by 43,174 votes.

Another SP candidate, R K Chaudhary, defeated Union minister Kaushal Kishore in the Mohanlalgarh reserved seat.

Congress won five seats in the central region — Rae Bareilly, Amethi, Allahabad, Barabanki and Sitapur.

In the south eastern part, SP won 13 seats, including Jaunpur, where BSP turncoat Babu Singh Kushwaha defeated BJP's Kripa Shankar Singh by 94,766 votes. Priya Saroj won the reserved Machhlishahr seat for SP by 34,536 votes.

Afzal Ansari, brother of don Mukhtar Ansari, won Ghazipur by 1.24 lakh votes. In Chandauli, SP's Virendra Singh defeated Union minister Mahendra Nath Pandey by 21,565 votes. Party nominee Chhotelal won the Robertsganj reserved seat by 92,726 votes.

In northeast UP, the party won Shravasti, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Azamgarh, Ghosi, Salempur, Ballia and the reserved Lalgaon seat.

Bundelkhand, too, saw an SP surge. Narayan Das Ahirwar won Jalaun by 53,898 votes and Krishna Devi Shivshanker Patel triumphed in Banda by 71,210 votes.



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Important dates for Online Registration-

1.	Commencement of Online Registration and Choice Filing. (Along with Application Fee Payment)	May 24, 2024 (Friday) from 11:00 A.M.
2.	Last Date and Time for Online Registration	June 15, 2024 (Saturday) till 05:30 P.M.

How to apply - The candidates are required to fill the online application form available at <https://dseuadm.samarth.edu.in/ug> Keep visiting DSEU website regularly for further updates. You may visit the above mentioned website for further details about the programs, eligibility and relaxation in eligibility to reserve categories, fees and admission process. In case of any difficulty to apply online application, candidate may visit DSEU (HQ) Dwarka.

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Shah stamps his supremacy in Gandhinagar with 7.4L win

Bettors His 5.6L Victory Margin Of '19

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Gandhinagar: Having begun his journey in public life more than 30 years ago as a booth-level BJP worker in Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency, Amit Shah stamped his supremacy on the prestigious constituency on Saturday, pulling off a spectacular win with a 7.4-lakh vote margin.

Shah defeated his Congress rival Sonal Patel, by 7,44,716 votes, the second-highest victory margin in Gujarat and likely among the top five in country, in 2024 general elections. Shah polled 10,10,972 votes against 2,66,256 votes polled by Patel. Shah contested a LS election for the first time in 2019 and won Gandhinagar by 5.6 lakh votes.

While the state BJP did play its part in scripting the record win by galvanising the



Amit Shah has nurtured the seat diligently over the past five years

cadre, Shah nurtured his home constituency diligently over the past five years. Almost all infrastructure being planned for Ahmedabad's bid to host the 2036 Olympics is going to come up within Gandhinagar LS constituency limits. These include Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sports Enclave, Naranpura Sports Complex and Olympic village at Manipur-Godhavi.

Gandhinagar ranks among the most significant seats in

In potato bowl, Cong reaps solitary success

In Gujarat's potato bowl, a plucky Congress legislator has denied BJP a hat-trick of clean sweep. Geniben Thakore gifted her party a consolation win in PM Narendra Modi's home state by trouncing rookie Rekha Chaudhary by 31,000 votes in Banaskantha Lok Sabha seat.

The feisty Thakore community leader, who hit the campaign trail pitching herself as "Banasi Ben (sister of Banas)", sent Rekha Chaudhary to a finish that went down to the wire. This is the first time in 62 years that a woman candidate has romped home in Banaskantha, after Congress' Zohrabai Chaudhary won the seat in 1962. The victory margin may look small, but it was a tall order for the 47-year-old Geniben to sway the fortunes in Congress' favour, considering BJP won this seat by 3.69 lakh votes in 2019.

"It was a contest between Geniben and Shankar Chaudhary, and not Rekha Chaudhary," Gujarat Congress spokesperson Parthivraj Kathwadia said. "This is defeat of 'sarkar' (govt) and 'sahkar' (cooperatives), as Shankarbai used his clout, but in vain." TEAM TOI

country. Apart from being the seat of state govt, stalwarts like former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee and BJP patriarch LK Advani have represented it in the past, and PM Modi is also a registered voter in Gandhinagar LS constituency. Before becoming an MP by winning Gandhinagar seat for the first time in 2019, Shah represented Naranpura assembly constituency, one of the assembly segments under Gandhinagar.

Capping three back-to-back roadshows covering all areas of his constituency a day before filing his nomination papers, Shah told a crowd in Vejalpur area on April 18, "People of Ahmedabad, PM Modi has given a prominent guarantee that the 2036 Olympic Games will be held in India. Tell me, where will it be held?" When the people answered 'Ahmedabad', Shah asserted, "It will be held in Gandhinagar constituency."

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL

SANDEEP ADHWARYU

THE MORNING AFTER...



Prajwal fails, but Gowdas retain their Vokkaliga base

TEAM TOI

Bengaluru: In what can be considered retention of Vokkaliga support despite all odds, ex-PM HD Deve Gowda-led Janata Dal(S) won two of three Lok Sabha seats it contested in alliance with BJP.

JD(S) state chief HD Kumaraswamy defeated Congress' Venkatarangam Gowda from Mandya by 2.8 lakh votes, avenging his son's defeat in 2019. Party candidate from Kolar reserved seat, Mallesh Babu, won with a margin of 1.27 lakh votes. Gowda's son-in-law and noted cardiologist CN Manjunath, fighting on a BJP ticket, defeated DK Suresh,

brother of deputy CM DK Shivakumar in his stronghold of Bengaluru Rural, by a massive 2.7 lakh votes.

"When Gowdas, especially Deve Gowda, are cornered politically, the Vokkaliga community supported them. This time also, they did the same," said a JD(S) functionary. The victories are likely to boost morale of the party hit by its drubbing in last year's assembly elections. Prajwal Revanna's alleged sex scandal, and efforts by Congress to split the party, a source said.

Meanwhile, Prajwal, jailed in sex scandal case, failed to retain the family's bastion of Hassan after three decades.

5 women from MP in LS: MP elected 5 women to Lok Sabha, highest ever. Anita N. Singh Chauhan, Himadri Singh, Sandhya Rai, Lata Vankhede & Bharti Pardhare, are of BJP.

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Full Stack Python with Data Science
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COURSE CONTENT: 1) Python Basics, 2) Web Development with Django/FastAPI, 3) ORMs (Object-Relational Mapping) by ORM (SQLAlchemy), 4) REST APIs, 5) Data Science Fundamentals, 6) Data Science & Analytics, 7) Data Science with Python, 8) Data Science with Machine Learning, 9) Data Science with Deep Learning, 10) Data Science with Big Data, 11) Data Science with Cloud, 12) Data Science with IoT, 13) Data Science with Blockchain, 14) Data Science with Quantum Computing, 15) Data Science with AI/ML, 16) Data Science with AR/VR, 17) Data Science with XR, 18) Data Science with MR, 19) Data Science with VR, 20) Data Science with AR, 21) Data Science with MR, 22) Data Science with XR, 23) Data Science with VR, 24) Data Science with AR, 25) Data Science with MR, 26) Data Science with XR, 27) Data Science with VR, 28) Data Science with AR, 29) Data Science with MR, 30) Data Science with XR, 31) Data Science with VR, 32) Data Science with AR, 33) Data Science with MR, 34) Data Science with XR, 35) 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